

### INDIA JUSTICE REPORT 2022: JUDGE VACANCIES REMAIN ENDEMIC

#### Why in News?

- According to the India Justice Report (IJR) 2022, Indian courts are jammed with cases and are functioning with fewer judges than the sanctioned number.

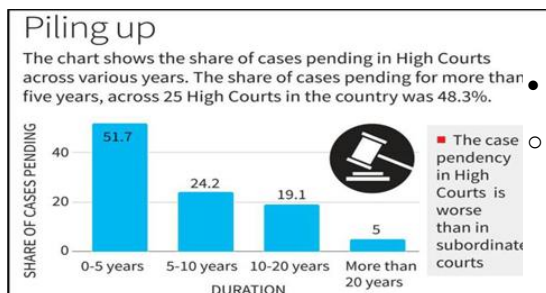
#### What is the India Justice Report? What's in Today's Article?

- It is a first of its kind national periodic reporting initiated by Tata Trusts in 2019 to **rank the capacity of all 36 states and UTs to deliver justice.**
- It analyses 4 core pillars of the justice system** (Police, Prisons, Judiciary and Legal aid) through the prism of budgets, human resources, workload, diversity, infrastructure, etc.
- The Report - a collaborative partnership between DAKSH, Common Cause, Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy, TISS-Prayas, etc - **brings together otherwise siloed data on the 4 pillars of Justice delivery.**
- The India Justice Report 2022 is the **3rd edition**, which also assesses the capacity of the **25 State Human Rights Commissions** in the country separately.

#### What are the Key Findings of the India Justice Report 2022?

- Overall ranking of the 18 mid-sized and large States (population over 1 crore):** Top (Karnataka), Worst (UP)
- Overall ranking of the 7 Small States (population less than 1 crore):** Top (Sikkim), Worst (Goa)

#### News Summary Regarding IJR's Findings wrt Judiciary:



#### Sanctioned vs actual strength:

- As of December 2022, against a sanctioned strength of **1,108 judges**, the High Courts were functioning with only **778 judges**.
- The subordinate courts were found functioning with **19,288 judges** against a sanctioned strength of **24,631 judges**.

- **Rising pendency:**
  - Correspondingly, the **number of cases pending per judge is rising** in most States over the last five years.
  - At HC level, **UP has the highest average pendency**, where cases remain pending for an average of 11.34 years.
  - The **lowest average HC pendency is in Tripura** [1 year], Sikkim [1.9 years] and Meghalaya [2.1 years].
- **Increasing caseload:** The number of cases a judge has to deal with has also steadily increased. Between 2018 and 2022, the caseload per judge **increased in 22 States and Union Territories**.
- **Case clearance rate (CCR):**
  - A CCR, or the number of cases disposed of in a year, measured against the number filed in that year, **of more than 100% indicates** that the number of pending cases is reducing.
  - **The HCs are increasingly clearing more cases annually** than subordinate courts.
  - **The HCs of Kerala and Odisha** have higher case clearance rates (156% and 131% respectively), while the HCs of Rajasthan [65%] and Bombay [72%] have the lowest case clearance rates.
  - **Tripura is the only State** where the CCR in district courts remained above 100%.
- **Infrastructure:** Nationally, the number of court halls appears sufficient for the number of actual judges, however, it added that **space will become a problem if all the sanctioned posts are filled**.

## WHAT IS LOKPAL?



Lokpal's office recently informed that **Around 68% of corruption complaints against public functionaries that landed with the Lokpal were "disposed off" without any action in the past four years.**

### About Lokpal:

- The Lokpal is a **statutory body** established under the **Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act 2013**.

- **Mandate:** To inquire into allegations of corruption against certain public functionaries and for related matters.
- **Organisational Structure:**
  - The Lokpal will consist of a **chairperson and a maximum of eight members.**
  - **Chairperson should be either the former Chief Justice of India Or the former Judge of the Supreme Court, or an eminent person** who fulfils eligibility criteria as specified.
  - Out of the maximum eight members, **half will be judicial members.** The judicial member of the Lokpal should be either a former Judge of the Supreme Court or a former Chief Justice of a High Court.
  - **Minimum fifty per cent of the Members will be from SC / ST / OBC / Minorities and women.**
- **How are members appointed?**
  - The Chairperson and the Members are **appointed by the President of India on the recommendation of a selection committee** composed of the **Prime Minister** as the Chairperson, the **Speaker of Lok Sabha**, the **Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha**, the **Chief Justice of India** or a Judge nominated by him/her, and **One eminent jurist.**
  - They hold office for a **term of five years** from the date on which they enter upon the office **or until they attain the age of 70 years**, whichever is earlier.
  - **The salary, allowances and other conditions of services of the Chairperson are the same as that of the Chief Justice of India.**
  - **The salary, allowances and other conditions of services of the Members are the same** as that of a **Judge of the Supreme Court.**
- **Jurisdiction:**
  - It has jurisdiction to inquire into allegations of corruption against anyone who is or has been **Prime Minister**, or a **Minister** in the Union government, or a **Member of Parliament**, as well as **officials of the Union Government under Groups A, B, C and D.**
  - It covers **chairpersons, members, officers and directors of any board, corporation, society, trust or autonomous body either established by an Act of Parliament** or wholly or partly funded by the Union or State government.

- It also covers any society or trust or body that receives foreign contribution above Rs 10 lakh.
- **Exceptions for Prime Minister:**
  - Lokpal cannot inquire allegations against the PM relating to international relations, external and internal security, public order, atomic energy and space.
  - Also, complaints against the PM are **not to be probed unless the full Lokpal bench considers the initiation of inquiry and at least 2/3rds of the members approve it.**

### **Powers of Lokpal:**

- It has powers to **superintendence over and to give direction to CBI.**
- If it has referred a case to CBI, the **investigating officer** in such case **cannot be transferred without the approval of Lokpal.**
- Powers to authorize CBI for search and seizure operations connected to such cases.
- **The Inquiry Wing** of the Lokpal has been **vested with the powers of a civil court.**
- Lokpal has **powers of confiscation of assets**, proceeds, receipts and benefits arisen or procured by means of corruption in special circumstances.
- Lokpal has the **power to recommend the transfer or suspension of public servants** connected with the allegation of corruption.
- Lokpal has the power to **give directions to prevent the destruction of records** during the preliminary inquiry

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### **WHAT IS THE HIGH MOBILITY ARTILLERY ROCKET SYSTEMS (HIMARS)?**



The United States recently announced an additional package of military aid to Ukraine, totalling \$2.6 billion, which includes additional ammunition for the High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems (HIMARS).

### **About High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems (HIMARS):**

- It is a **light multiple rocket launcher.**



# CROSS & CLIMB ROHTAK



- It is **manufactured** by **Lockheed Martin** Corporation, a US-based security and aerospace company.
  - **Features:**
    - It is an **air-transportable wheeled launcher mounted on 5-ton Family of Medium Tactical Vehicles (FMTV)**.
    - It can **fire six guided missiles in quick succession**.
    - Himars fires **GPS-guided missiles** which can be **more accurately targeted**.
    - **Range:**
      - The missiles **supplied to Ukraine** have a range of **up to 50 miles (80 km)**.
      - Himars can also fire a **single Army Tactical Missile System missile**, which has a **range of 186 miles (300 km)**.
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## UN WATER CONFERENCE

### Why in News?

- Recently, the United Nations 2023 Water Conference was held in New York, **USA**.
- It was co-hosted by the **Netherlands** and **Tajikistan**.

### What is the Water Conference?

- The first UN Water Conference was held in **Argentina** in **1977**.
- It was attended by 116 governments at the highest decision-making level in the area of water as well as by numerous international and non-governmental organizations.
- It resulted in the first global ‘**Action Plan**’ recognizing that “**all peoples, whatever their stage of development and social and economic conditions, have the right to have access to drinking water in quantities and of a quality equal to their basic needs.**”
- This declaration led to several decades of global funding and concerted effort to provide drinking water and sanitation for all.
- These actions substantially reduced the population without access to safe drinking water in much of the developing world.

## About UN 2023 Water Conference:

- Since the first UN Water Conference was held in Argentina in 1977, the Earth's population has doubled to 8 billion people and demand for water is skyrocketing.
- The UN 2023 Water Conference was, as the UN said, the most important water event in a generation.
- **Objective** – To raise awareness of the global water crisis and decide on action to achieve internationally agreed water-related goals.
- On **March 22-24**, it was co-hosted by **Netherlands** and **Tajikistan**.
- The conference was based on the following five themes –
  - **Water for Health** –
    - Access to 'WASH' (Global Water, Sanitation, & Hygiene) including the Human Rights to Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation.
  - **Water for Sustainable Development** –
    - Valuing water, the water-energy-food nexus and sustainable economic and urban development.
  - **Water for Climate, Resilience and Environment** –
    - Source to sea, biodiversity, climate, resilience and disaster risk reduction.
  - **Water for Cooperation** –
    - Transboundary and international water cooperation, cross sectoral cooperation and water across the 2030 Agenda.
  - **Water Action Decade** –
    - Accelerating the implementation of the objectives of the Decade for Action, including through the UN Secretary-General's Action Plan.

## What was the Need for a Water Conference in 2023?

- Since the late 1970s, when the last Water Conference took place, the world has been focused on the business of rapid growth and development.
- But a growing global population – predicted by the UN to reach 8.5 billion by 2030 – means the demands on our water resources are far greater than 50 years ago.



- Natural resources crises, including for water and food, come within the top 10 biggest risks facing humanity in the coming decade, in the World Economic Forum’s Global Risks Report 2023.
- It cites one UN estimate that places the **gap between water demand and supply at 40% by 2030.**
- The World Meteorological Organization estimates that 3.6 billion people struggle to get enough water to meet their needs for at least one month every year.
- It forecasts that **5 billion people – more than half of humanity – will be facing the same plight by 2050.**
- It’s clear that we need to rethink our approach to how we can best allocate and value water, and that’s what this Conference was about.
- This Conference was aimed at providing a roadmap for countries, sectors and river basins.

#### About Jal Jeevan Mission:

- Jal Jeevan Mission is a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme**, launched by the **Ministry of Jal Shakti** on 15<sup>th</sup> August, 2019.
- **Objective – To provide to all households in rural India safe and adequate water through individual household tap connections by 2024.**
- The Jal Jeevan Mission is based on a **community approach** to water.
- According to the government, the mission includes Information, Education and Communication as key components.
- The mission is meant to create a people's movement for water, making it everyone’s priority.

#### About W12+ Blueprint

- W12+ Blueprint is a **UNESCO platform** hosting city profiles and case studies of programs, technologies, policies that addresses common water security challenges.
- It is an **online information tool** for informing those working on urban water issues, thought leadership, and advocacy around global water solutions.

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#### [KEY FACTS ABOUT NATHU LA PASS](#)

A massive avalanche recently struck the popular Nathu La mountain pass in Sikkim, trapping several tourists.



## About Nathu La Pass:

- **Location:** It is a mountain pass in the **Himalayas in the East Sikkim district.**
- **Altitude:** It is situated at an altitude of **4302 m** and is **one of the highest motorable roads in the world.**
- Nathu means "listening ears", and La means "pass" in Tibetan. It forms a **part of an offshoot of the ancient Silk Road.**
- Nathu La **connects the Indian state of Sikkim with China's Tibet Autonomous Region.**
- It is **guarded** on both sides by **Chinese and Indian soldiers.**
- Nathu La is **one of the three open trading border posts between India and China; the other two** are in Himachal Pradesh (**Shipkila**) and Uttarakhand (**Lipulekh**).
- **Sealed by India after the 1962 Sino-Indian War**, Nathu La was **re-opened in 2006** following numerous bilateral trade agreements.

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## FINLAND JOINS NATO

### Why in news?

- Finland joined the NATO military alliance, dealing a major blow to Russia with a historic realignment of the continent triggered by Moscow's invasion of Ukraine.

### North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

- Formed in 1949 with the signing of the Washington Treaty, NATO is a security alliance of 30 countries from North America and Europe.
  - Recently, Finland joined the alliance as 31<sup>st</sup>
- NATO's fundamental goal is to safeguard the Allies' freedom and security by political and military means.



- It is a system of collective defence where independent member states agree for mutual defence in case of any attack by external party.
- **Article 5** of the Washington Treaty states that an attack against one Ally is an attack against all.
- This article forms the core of the Alliance, a promise of collective defense.
- **Headquarter** - Brussels, Belgium.

## Functions of NATO

- **Political**
  - NATO promotes democratic values and enables members to consult and cooperate on defence and security-related issues to solve problems, build trust and, in the long run, prevent conflict.
- **Military**
  - NATO is committed to the peaceful resolution of disputes.
  - If diplomatic efforts fail, it has the military power to undertake crisis-management operations.

## Should India join NATO?

### Arguments in favour of joining

- **End of Cold War era**
  - During the Cold War, India's refusal was premised on its non-alignment.
  - This argument has little justification once the Cold War ended during 1989-91.
  - NATO has regular consultations with both Russia and China, despite the gathering tensions with them in recent years.
  - This presents a case for India to join the alliance.
- **To combat terrorism**
  - India has seen many terrorist attacks – 26/11 Mumbai terror attack, Pulwama, Uri attack etc.
  - Hence, security analysts suggest that India should join NATO to combat terrorism on a long-term basis.
- **Members of NATO are well-established partners of India**
  - Indian membership would simply mean having regular contact with a military alliance, most of whose members are well-established partners of India.
  - India has military exchanges with many members of NATO — including the US, Britain, and France — in bilateral and minilateral formats.

○ Hence, collective engagement with NATO should not be problematic.

- **To contain China**

○ NATO is increasing its footprints in Indian Ocean Region where China is aggressive.

○ NATO membership would help India in containing China.

### Arguments against joining the alliance

- **Fear of antagonising Russia**

○ Russia has been a long-term ally for India. Even, during the current Ukraine war, India has not openly criticised Russia.

○ India still is heavily dependent on the Russian military equipment. Hence, joining NATO will lead to the deterioration of the relationship.

- **It would hurl India headlong into the Global War on Terror**

○ Joining NATO on full-term basis could become problematic for India as it would drag India into various conflicts around the globe.

- Collective self-defence article would force India to contribute its troops to support NATO.

- **Sovereignty and Principle of Non-Alignment**

○ Joining the alliance would lead to the establishment of NATO bases on India's territory which may be considered an infringement of our sovereignty.

○ So far, India has not joined any military bloc and remained true to the principle of non-alignment which forms the core of India's foreign policy.

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