VAJIRAM & RAVI
Institute for IAS Examination

The Analyst

CURRENT AFFAIRS Handout

11th May 2025

The Analyst Handout
11th May 2025

Judicial Pendency in India

CONTEXT: As the Delhi High Court functions at 60% of its sanctioned strength, the court in an order on April 25, flagged "overflowing dockets" and admitted that it is "unable to decide" appeals "within reasonable period of time".

Background

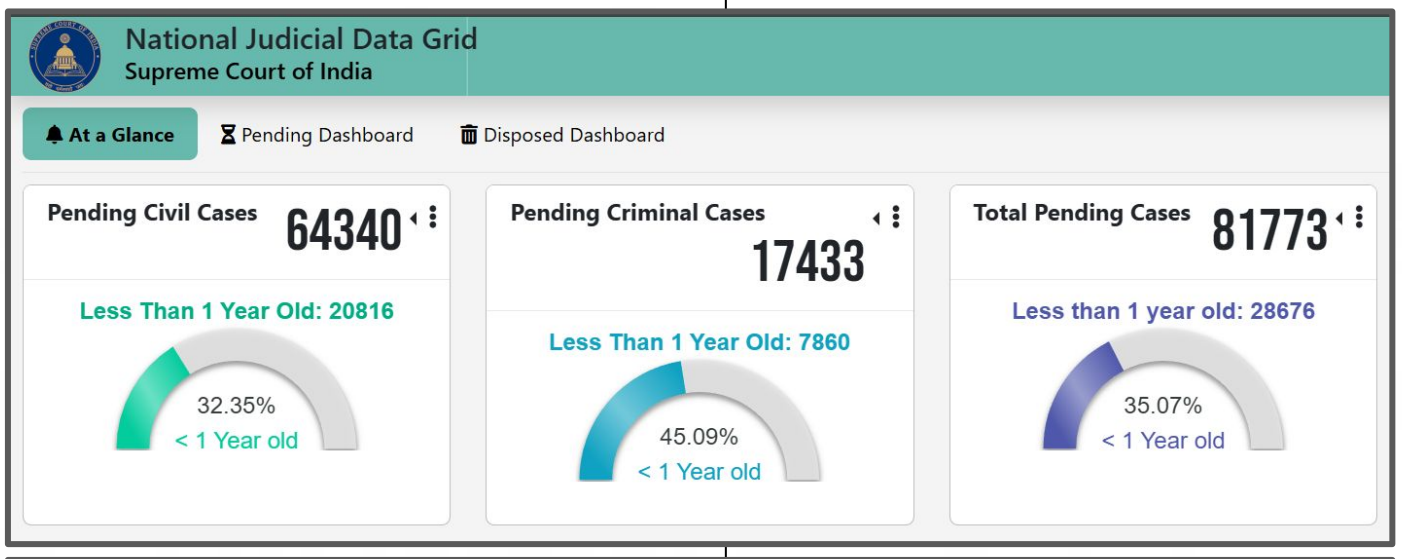
- **Judge Vacancy: Operates at 60% of its sanctioned strength** (36 sitting judges out of 60).
- **Population Burden: Less than 1 High Court judge per 10 lakh people** (0.6 HC judge per 10 lakh).
- **Caseload Pressure: Judges often have 80–100 matters daily, many remain unheard even after 5 PM.**
- **Backlog Rising: In March 2025, new cases outnumbered disposals, especially in criminal and civil writ cases.**

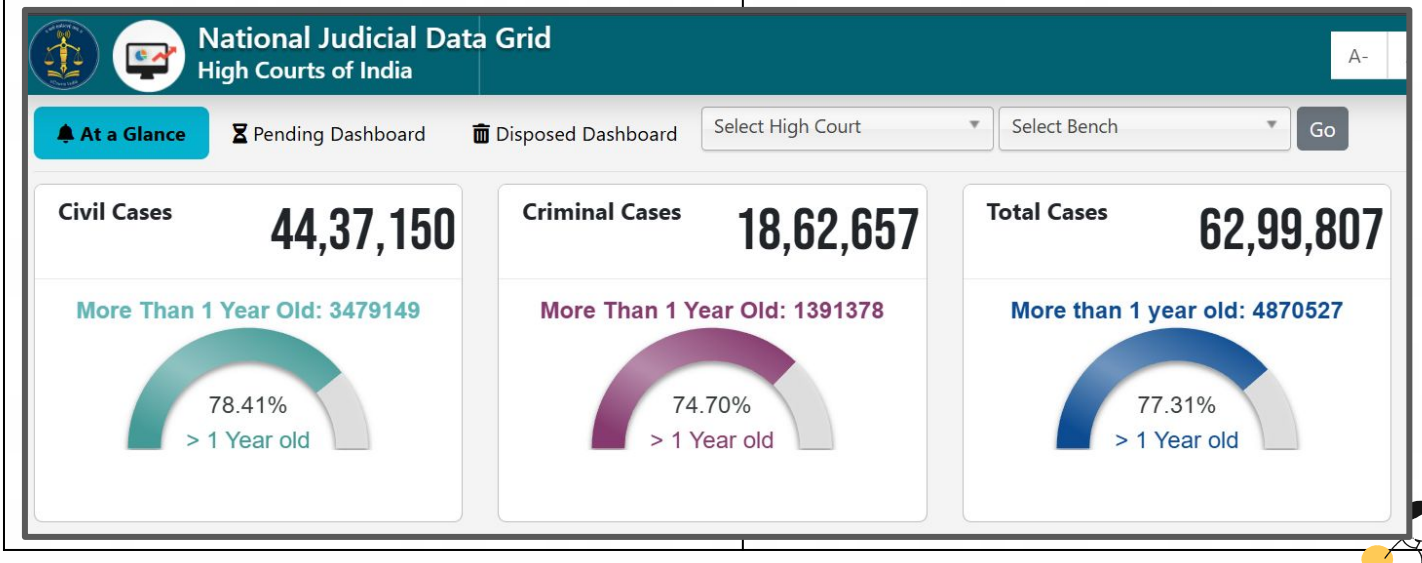
THE PENDING LIST

Category of cases	Pendency As On 01.03.25	Pendency as on 31.03.2025	Cases instituted in the month	Cases disposed during the month
Civil writ petitions	33,323	33,648	1,512	1,187*
Civil cases, other than tax (appellate side)	30,131	30,109	935	957**
Tax appeals & references	2,410	2,379	47	78**
Original side cases	17,449	17,512	732	669*
Criminal side cases	33,166	33,577	1,760	1349*
Company side cases	781	775	2	8**
TOTAL	1,17,260	1,18,000	4,988	4,248*

Overall pendency

*Increased during the month; more cases instituted than could be disposed of **Decreased





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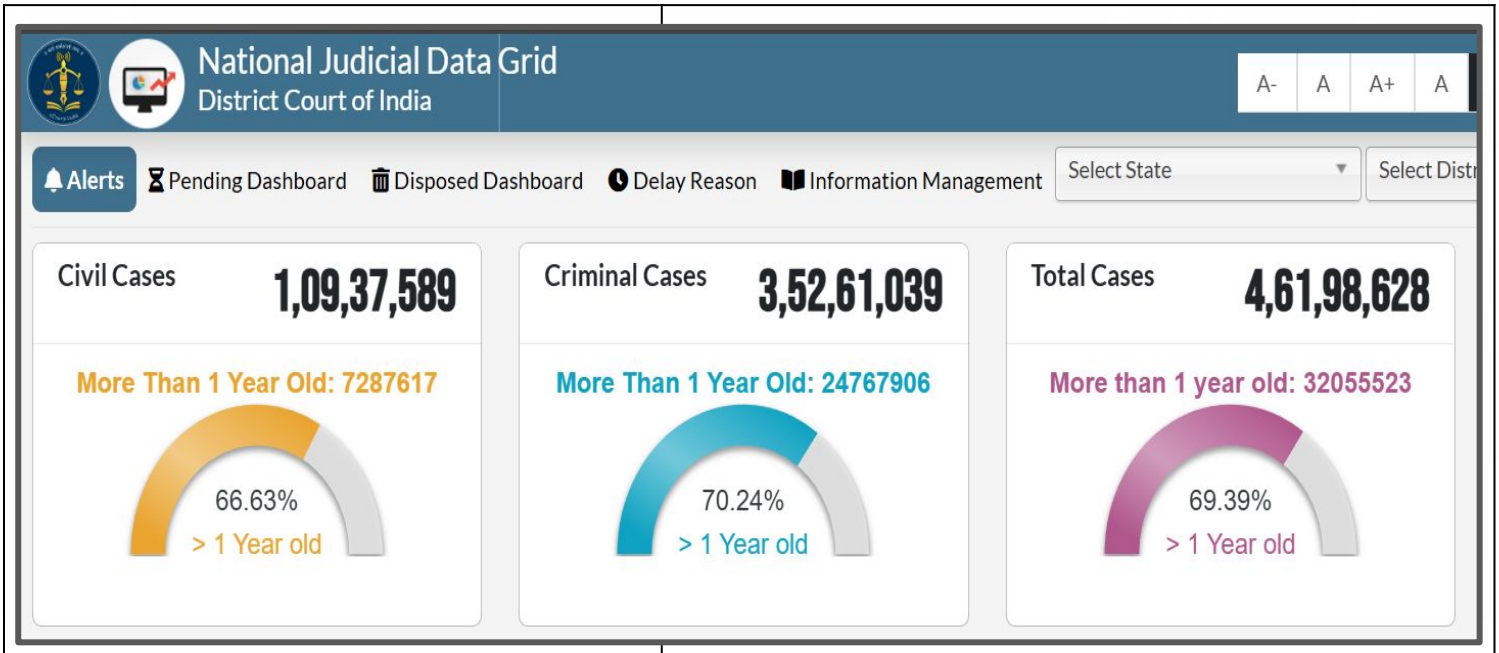

Reasons for High Pendency of Cases

- Insufficient Judges : 21 judges/ million people (2023), 50 judges/ million (Law Commission, 1987). (DoJ, 2023)
- Increased Litigation : 77 lakh new cases, subordinate courts, with a 3% yearly increase due to population growth and socio-economic disputes. (Source: NJDG, 2024)
- Lack of Infrastructure
- Overuse of Special Leave Petitions (SLPs): Article 136
- Government Litigation
- Inefficient Scheduling
- Adjournment Culture
- Procedural inefficiencies

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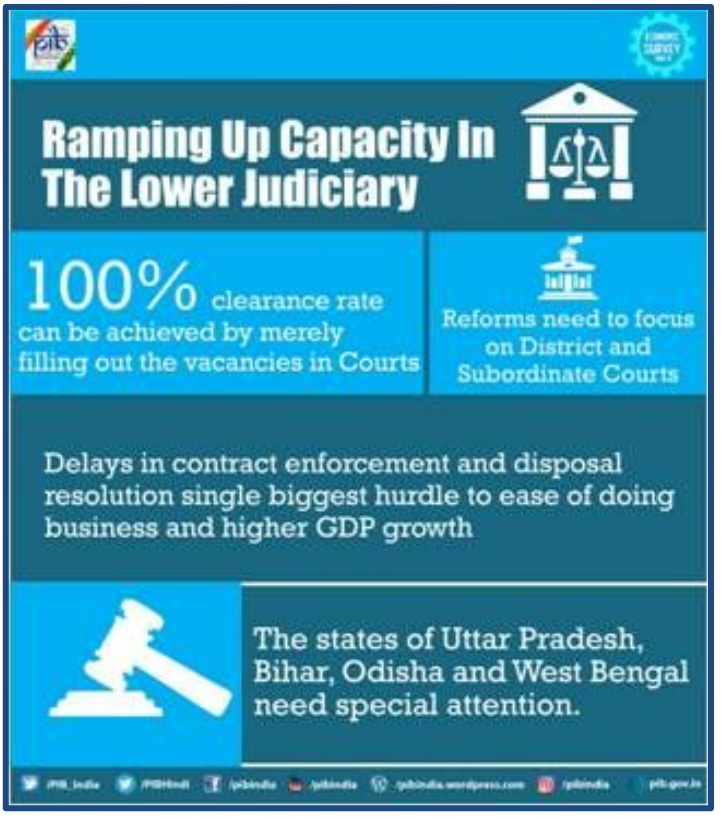
Initiatives taken to address the pendency of Cases

Initiative	Purpose	Key Achievement/Feature
SUPACE (Supreme Court Portal for Assistance in Court's Efficiency)	AI-powered tool to assist judges/legal researchers with relevant case data.	Provides comprehensive case references for informed decisions.
SUVAS (Supreme Court Vidhik Anuvad Software)	Translates Supreme Court judgments into regional languages.	Enhances accessibility of legal documents for non-English speakers.
Live Streaming	Broadcasts court proceedings in real-time.	**Gujarat HC** became the 1st court to live-stream proceedings; SC allows streaming for constitutional cases.
e-Courts Project	Digitizes court processes for efficiency and transparency.	**Phase III (2023-27)** launched with ₹7,000 crore budget; covers 100% digital case tracking and virtual courts.

What should be done?

- Addressing judicial Vacancies
- Efficient Investigation and Prosecution
- Ramping up infrastructure
- AIJS
- Strict Timeline for Government Litigation
- Alternative Dispute Resolution mechanism
- Use of technology
- Legislative changes- updating obsolete laws.



Mains Practise Question

Question : Judicial delay in India continues to be a major obstacle to effective justice delivery. Discuss the key causes behind this delay and suggest some reform to address the problem(10 Marks, 150 words)

The Analyst Handout
11th May 2025

National Green Tribunal

CONTEXT: 980 trees felled in Greater Noida: In affidavit before NGT, UP official says company 'denied responsibility

Basics

- **Rio Earth Summit**
- **Subhash Kumar v. State of Bihar (1991)**

Structure & Composition

- **Key Members:**
  - **Chairperson** (appointed by Central Govt. in consultation with CJI).
  - **Judicial Members** (10–20) and **Expert Members** (10–20) selected by a committee.
- **Tenure:** Max **5 years** or until age **65** (no reappointment).
- **Benches:** Principal Bench (New Delhi) + regional benches in **Bhopal, Pune, Kolkata, Chennai**.

Powers & Jurisdiction

- **Scope:**
  - Adjudicates **civil cases** under 7 environmental laws (e.g., Water Act 1974, Air Act 1981, Forest Act 1980).
  - **Suo Motu Powers** (since 2021) to act on environmental violations.
- **Legal Flexibility:**
  - Not bound by **CPC 1908** or **Indian Evidence Act 1872**.
  - Follows **Principles of Natural Justice**.
- **Key Principles Applied:**
  - Sustainable Development
  - Precautionary Principle
  - Polluter Pays Principle

Orders & Appeals

- **Orders:**
  - Binding decisions, executable as **civil court decrees**.
  - Can award **compensation** and **remedial measures**.
- **Appeals:**
  - Tribunal may **review its own orders**.
  - Appeals to **Supreme Court** within **90 days** if dissatisfied.

Key Environmental Laws Covered

NGT handles cases under:

1. Water (Prevention & Control of Pollution) Act, 1974
2. Water (Prevention & Control of Pollution) Cess Act, 1977
3. Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980
4. Air (Prevention & Control of Pollution) Act, 1981
5. Environment (Protection) Act, 1986
6. Public Liability Insurance Act, 1991
7. Biological Diversity Act, 2002

Significance of NGT

- **Fast-Track Justice : Cleared 78% of cases (2019-23)** within 1 year. (NGT Annual Report 2023)
- **Specialized Expertise : Judicial + Technical Members: Ensures science-backed rulings.**
- **Polluter Pays Principle Enforcement :** Fined Delhi Govt**. ₹25 crore for waste mismanagement (2023).**
- **Suo Motu Powers :** Acted against **Bengaluru lake encroachment (2021).**

The Analyst Handout
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National Green Tribunal

CONTEXT: 980 trees felled in Greater Noida: In affidavit before NGT, UP official says company 'denied responsibility

- **Global Benchmark : Only 3rd country with such a tribunal;** resolved 5,000+ cases since 2010.
- **Binding Orders : Enforced Diesel Vehicle Ban in Delhi-NCR (2015),** reducing **PM2.5 by 20%.**
- **Public Participation :** Allowed citizen petitions**—30% cases filed by NGOs/activists.**

Issues with NGT

- **Case Backlog:** Over 10,000 pending cases (2024); delays exceed 6-month resolution mandate. *(Source: NGT Annual Report 2023)*
- **Limited Access :** Only five benches nationwide; many states lack dedicated tribunals.
- **Weak Enforcement :** 40% of penalties unpaid, eroding NGT's authority.
- **Expert Shortage :** 30% of expert posts vacant; slows decisions on technical issues.
- **Exclusion of key Environmental Acts**
- **State Dependency :** Delayed data/report submissions from state authorities hinder progress.
- **Low Awareness :** Minimal rural engagement due to limited public outreach.

What should be done?

- **Fast-Track Disposal : digital case management systems.**
- **Expand Presence : circuit benches and virtual hearings** to improve access.
- **Strengthen Enforcement : Create a recovery mechanism** for unpaid penalties and ensure follow-up.
- **Fill Vacancies : Accelerate recruitment of expert members** with specialized environmental knowledge.
- **Enhance Powers : Amend laws to grant limited criminal jurisdiction** for serious violations.
- **Improve Coordination :** Mandate timelines for state data submission and **penalize non-compliance.**
- **Boost Outreach : Launch awareness drives and legal aid programs.**

Prelims PYQ 2018

How is the National Green Tribunal (NGT) different from the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB)?

1. *The NGT has been established by an Act whereas the CPCB has been created by an executive order of the Government.*
2. *The NGT provides environmental justice and helps reduce the burden of litigation in the higher courts whereas the CPCB promotes cleanliness of streams and wells, and aims to improve the quality of air in the country.*

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2

Mains Practise Question

Question :Despite being a crucial environmental adjudicatory body, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) faces several operational and structural challenges. Examine these challenges and suggest a way forward to enhance its effectiveness in ensuring environmental justice in India.(10 Marks, 150 words)

The Analyst Handout
11th May 2025

Is Safe Harbour important for Social Media?

SYLLABUS: GS Paper 2: Executive, Government Policies and Interventions
Newspaper : The Hindu, **Page No : 14**

The story so far:

In written submissions to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Communication and Information Technology, the Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting said that it is reconsidering the concept of safe harbour for social media platforms, to combat the issue of "fake news" online.

What is safe harbour?

Safe harbour is a legal concept that protects individual websites that allow third party users to share content from legal liability for any unlawful posts. The concept was put in place in the early years of the internet as a key safeguard to encourage innovation online and prevent website owners from being unfairly hounded for content they had no hand in publishing. The concept of a middleman being responsible for third party content is known as intermediary liability, and safe harbour protects sites, by default, from any criminal action for content hosted by them. In the U.S., safe harbour is enshrined in Section 230 of the Communications Act of 1934, inserted into the decades-old law in 1996. In India, Section 79 of the Information Technology Act, 2000, grants intermediaries similar protections.

The protections are not without conditions. In India, if an intermediary receives "actual knowledge" of illegal content on their website, they lose liability protections under Section 79 if they don't work to take the content down within a certain time period. The Supreme Court has read down "actual knowledge" to mean a court order or government notification.

> The Union government has pitched amending safe harbour as a way to get platforms to be more proactive in governing their sites

Without safe harbour protections, online intermediaries could face tremendous consequences for illegal content. For instance, in 2004, the then head of the website eBay in India was arrested because of a user listing of a disk containing child sex abuse material for sale.

How are intermediary liability protections regulated in India?

While safe harbour does have the conditions described above, the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 has put in place additional conditions for platforms to retain protection from intermediary liability. Social media firms need to have a nodal officer, a grievance officer resident in India, and need to periodically submit reports of complaints they receive on content, and action taken against them for this. Different parts of the IT Rules have been challenged in courts in the last few years.

For example, in 2023, the Union government notified the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Amendment Rules, 2023, which contained provisions that would strip safe harbour from sites for content that has been notified as "fake news" by the Press Information Bureau's fact check unit. That amendment was immediately challenged in the Bombay High Court, among others by the comedian Kunal Kamra. Petitioners accused the government of exceeding its authority by designating a fact check unit that could be an arbiter of truth, and putting pressure on social media companies to take content down without following the longer process of sending a notice to users whose content is being removed. The Bombay High Court sided with Mr. Kamra, and the case is being appealed by the government.

Why is the government considering amending the safe harbour clause?

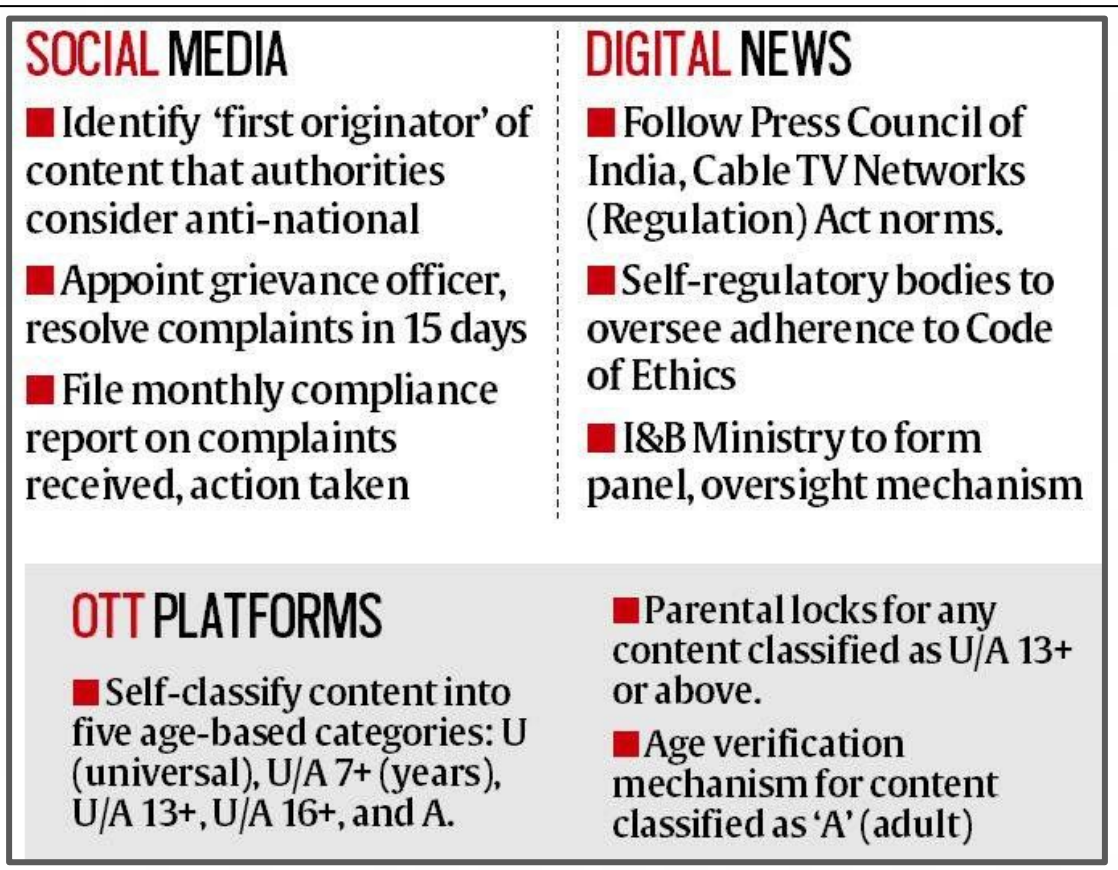
The government has accused foreign social media platforms of flouting Indian laws and acting too slowly on takedown notices. On multiple occasions before Elon Musk acquired Twitter, now known as X, the platform had public confrontations with the Union government regarding orders to hide users' content. X under Mr. Musk has continued to fight the government's right to issue blocking and takedown orders without notice to users at the Karnataka High Court. The Union government has pitched amending safe harbour as a way to get platforms to be more proactive in governing their sites, not just for what they deem to be misinformation, but for AI-generated deepfakes, cyberfrauds and so on. In the U.S., both former President Joe Biden and current President Donald Trump have taken aim at Section 230 for different reasons – Mr. Biden's White House sought to weaken safe harbour protections as a way to make platforms more liable for extremist content, and Mr. Trump for the alleged silencing of conservative voices.

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology has indicated that it would draft a Digital India Act (DIA) that would incorporate these changes, but the outlines of how safe harbour would change under this proposed law have not yet been revealed. Moreover, no DIA draft law has been released yet.

The Analyst Handout
11th May 2025

Is Safe Harbour important for Social Media?

SYLLABUS: GS Paper 2: Executive, Government Policies and Interventions
Newspaper : The Hindu, **Page No : 14**



The Analyst Handout
11th May 2025

Tapti River Recharge Project

SYLLABUS: GS Paper 2: Cooperative Federalism
Newspaper : The Hindu, **Page No : 9**

In a significant move towards regional water security, the governments of Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra on Saturday signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to jointly implement the Tapti Basin Mega Recharge Project. The agreement, aimed at addressing the water needs of select regions in both States, was finalised following a meeting of the Madhya Pradesh-Maharashtra Inter-State Control Board held in Bhopal.

The MoU was signed by Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav and Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, marking a renewed effort to harness inter-State river resources for sustainable development. The project is the third such initiative undertaken by the Madhya Pradesh government in the past year, following the Ken-Betwa link with Uttar Pradesh and the Parvati-Kalisindh-Chambal project with Rajasthan.

Under the proposed project, water from the Tapti river – which originates in Madhya Pradesh's Betul district – will be diverted to cater to the drinking water needs of north-eastern Maharashtra, including Nagpur, and provide irrigation support to southern and southeastern districts of Madhya Pradesh such as Burhanpur and Khandwa. Notably, the river is known as the Tapi in Maharashtra.

M.P. Chief Minister Yadav said consultations would be held with the Centre to seek recognition of the Tapti initiative as a national water project. He noted that the total planned utilisation of water under the scheme stands at 31.13 thousand million cubic feet (TMC), with 11.76 TMC allocated to M.P. and 19.36 TMC to Maharashtra.

Prelims Pointers

- Tapti (Tapi) : second largest west-flowing river of Peninsular India.
- Origin : Multai in Madhya Pradesh at 752 m elevation.
- Flows 724 km before draining into the Arabian Sea via the Gulf of Khambhat.
- Covers parts of Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Gujarat.
- Basin area is around 65,000 sq. km.
- Bounded by Satpura (N), Mahadev Hills (E), Ajanta & Satmala (S), Arabian Sea (W).
- Basin has two regions – forested hills and fertile plains.
- Khandesh region in Maharashtra forms the main fertile plain area.
- Major tributaries:
  - Right bank: Suki, Gomai, Arunavati, Aner
  - Left bank: Vaghur, Amravati, Buray, Panjhra, Bori, Girna, Purna, Mona, Sipna

The Analyst Handout
11th May 2025

States attain UN SDGs in Mortality Ratio

SYLLABUS: GS Paper 3: Inclusive Growth, Growth & Development
Newspaper : The Hindu, **Page No : 11**

Bindu Shajan Perappadan
NEW DELHI

Three States in India – Kerala, Maharashtra, and Tamil Nadu – have attained the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) targets in Maternal Mortality Rate or MMR (<=70 by 2030); Under-Five Mortality Rate or U5MR (<=25 by 2030); and Neonatal Mortality Rate or NMR (<=12 by 2030), according to the Sample Registration System Report 2021 released by the Registrar-General of India earlier this week.

According to the report, eight States have already attained the MMR SDG target, including Kerala (20), Maharashtra (38), Telangana (45), Andhra Pradesh (46), Tamil Nadu (49), Jharkhand (51), Gujarat (53), and Karnataka (63).

Improvement continues in maternal and child health indicators, says report. G.N. RAO

Twelve States/Union Territories have already attained the U5MR SDG target – Kerala (eight), Delhi (14), Tamil Nadu (14), Jammu and Kashmir (16), Maharashtra (16), West Bengal (20), Karnataka (21), Punjab (22), Telangana (22), Himachal Pradesh (23), Andhra Pradesh (24), and Gujarat (24).

Six States/Union Territories have already attained the NMR SDG target – Kerala (four), Delhi (eight), Tamil Nadu (nine), Maharashtra (11), Jammu & Kashmir (12), and Himachal Pradesh (12).

India has continued to see significant improvement in key maternal and child health indicators, the report said.

A special bulletin on MMR in India in 2019-21, based on data from the Sample Registration System, found India's MMR had shown a marked reduction, declining by 37 points from 130 per lakh live births in 2014-16 to 93 in 2019-21.

The downward trend in child mortality indicators also continues.

The Analyst Handout
11th May 2025

States attain UN SDGs in Mortality Ratio

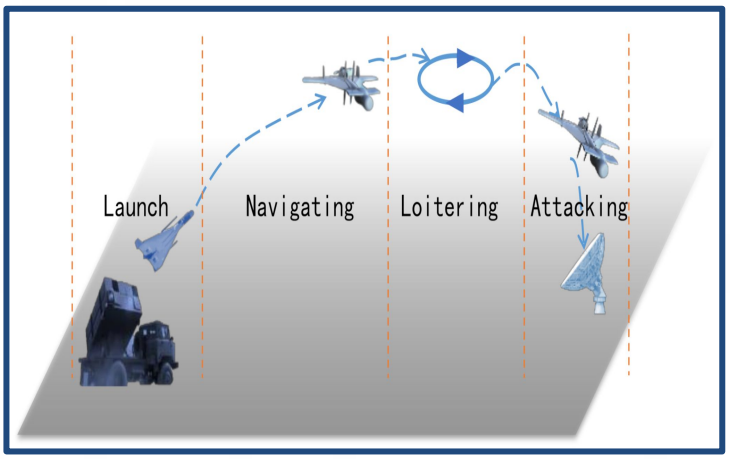
SYLLABUS: GS Paper 3: Inclusive Growth, Growth & Development
Newspaper : The Hindu, **Page No : 11**

The Analyst Handout

11th May 2025

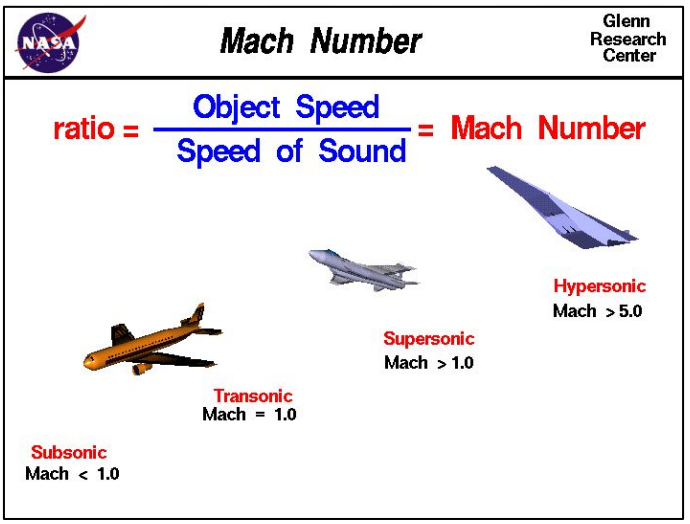
Cruise vs Ballistic Missiles

SYLLABUS: GS Paper 3: Defence
Newspaper : The Indian Express, **Page No : 01**



Cruise Missile	Ballistic Missile
Low-altitude, self-guided, and follows a relatively straight path.	High-altitude, ballistic trajectory (arc-shaped) after initial propulsion.
Jet engines or turbojets for sustained flight.	Rocket engines for initial boost, then relies on momentum and gravity.
Subsonic to supersonic speeds.	Hypersonic speeds during re-entry phase.
Hard to detect due to low-altitude flight	Easier to detect during boost phase due to heat and smoke trails
Highly maneuverable, can change course mid-flight.	Limited maneuverability after initial launch.
Typically shorter range (hundreds of kilometers).	Can have very long ranges (thousands of kilometers).

BrahMos is developed under a joint venture between the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), India and NPO Mashinostroyenia (NPOM), Russia



The Analyst Handout
11th May 2025

Cruise vs Ballistic Missiles

SYLLABUS: GS Paper 3: Defence
Newspaper : The Indian Express, **Page No : 01**

Prelims 2024

58. Consider the following statements :

1. Ballistic missiles are jet-propelled at subsonic speeds throughout their flights, while cruise missiles are rocket-powered only in the initial phase of flight.

2. Agni-V is a medium-range supersonic cruise missile, while BrahMos is a solid-fuelled intercontinental ballistic missile.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 only

(b) 2 only

(c) Both 1 and 2

(d) Neither 1 nor 2

MAINS 2021

Q5. S-400 हवाई रक्षा प्रणाली, विश्व में इस समय उपलब्ध अन्य किसी प्रणाली की तुलना में किस प्रकार से तकनीकी रूप से श्रेष्ठ है ? (150 शब्दों में उत्तर दीजिए)

How is S-400 air defence system technically superior to any other system presently available in the world ? (Answer in 150 words) *10*

The Analyst Handout
11th May 2025

Commissioned Ranks of Indian Armed Forces

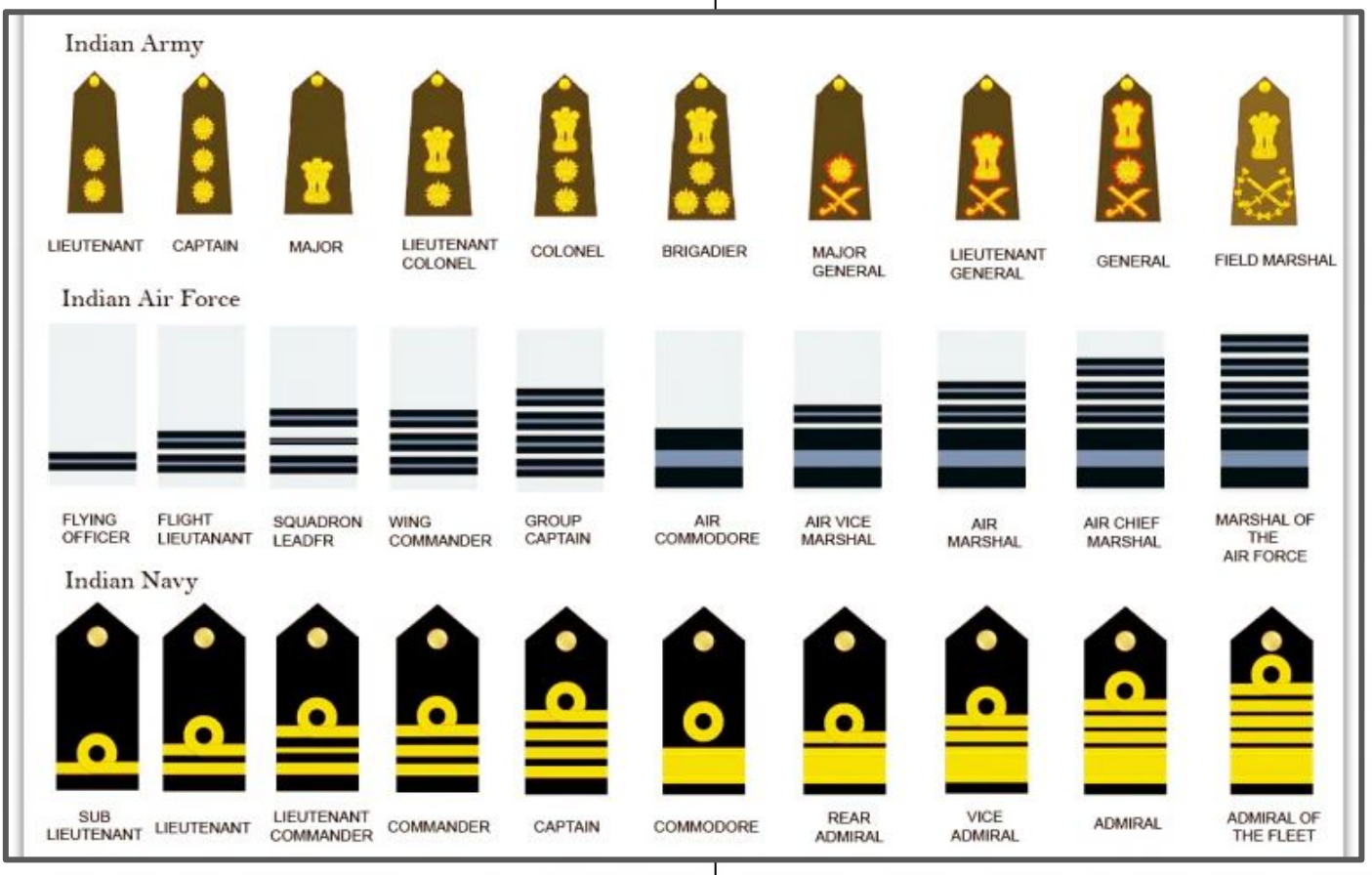
SYLLABUS: GS Paper 3: Defence
Newspaper : The Hindu, **Page No : 10**

Dinakar Peri
NEW DELHI

Every misadventure by Pakistan has been met with strength and every future escalation will invite a decisive response, Commodore Raghu R. Nair said a news briefing here on Saturday.

The briefing was held shortly after U.S. President Donald Trump posted on social media that India and Pakistan agreed on an immediate "ceasefire" and Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri announced that the Directors-General of Military Operations (DGMOs) of the two countries had

In one voice: Wing Commander Vyomika Singh, Naval Commodore Raghu R. Nair and Indian Army Colonel Sophia Qureshi speak during a press briefing at the Ministry of External Affairs on Saturday. AFP



The Analyst Handout
11th May 2025

Commissioned Ranks of Indian Armed Forces

SYLLABUS: GS Paper 3: Defence
Newspaper : The Hindu, **Page No : 10**

Prelims 2024

69. Which of the following is/are correctly matched in terms of equivalent rank in the three services of Indian Defence forces ?

	Army	*Airforce*	*Navy*
1.	Brigadier	Air Commodore	Commander
2.	Major General	Air Vice Marshal	Vice Admiral
3.	Major	Squadron Leader	Lieutenant Commander
4.	Lieutenant Colonel	Group Captain	Captain

Select the correct answer using the code given below :

(a) 1 and 4

(b) 1 and 3

(c) 2, 3 and 4

(d) 3 only

The Analyst Handout
11th May 2025

Daily Quiz

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding Judicial Pendency in India:

1. The number of High Court judges per 10 lakh population is less than 1 in India.
2. The Law Commission (1987) recommended increasing the judge-to-population ratio to 50 per million.
3. There are over 81,000 pending cases in the Supreme Court alone.

How many of the statements given above is/are correct?

a) Only One
b) Only Two
c) All Three
d) None

Answer: c

Q2. Regarding the National Green Tribunal (NGT), consider the following statements:

1. The Central Government appoints the Chairperson of the NGT in consultation with the Chief Justice of India.
2. NGT follows the principles laid down in the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908.
3. It has its principal bench in New Delhi along with regional benches in Bhopal, Pune, Kolkata, and Chennai.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

a) 1 and 2 only
b) 1 and 3 only
c) 2 and 3 only
d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: b

Q3. Consider the following statements regarding the Tapti (Tapi) River system:

1. The Tapti River originates in Madhya Pradesh.
2. Important left bank tributaries include Gomai, Suki, and Aner.
3. The Tapti is the largest west-flowing river in Peninsular India.

How many of the statements given above is/are correct?

a) Only One
b) Only Two
c) All Three
d) None

Answer: a

Q4. Consider the following statements regarding Cruise Missiles and Ballistic Missiles:

1. Cruise missiles use jet or turbojet engines and can fly at low altitudes, making them hard to detect.
2. Ballistic missiles rely on rocket engines for initial thrust and typically follow a fixed parabolic trajectory.
3. Cruise missiles are more manoeuvrable than ballistic missiles.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

a) 1 only
b) 1 and 2 only
c) 2 and 3 only
d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: d

Q5. Arrange the following Indian Air Force ranks in ascending order of seniority:

1. Squadron Leader
2. Wing Commander
3. Air Commodore
4. Air Marshal

Select the correct answer using the codes given below.

a) 1 - 2 - 3 - 4
b) 2 - 1 - 3 - 4
c) 1 - 3 - 2 - 4
d) 2 - 3 - 1 - 4

Answer: a

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