

Today's Prelims Topics

Vizhinjam Port

Context

Recently one of the world's largest and most fuel-efficient container ships, **MSC Türkiye**, docked at Vizhinjam International Seaport.

About Vizhinjam International Seaport

- It is **India's first deepwater transshipment port** located in **Vizhinjam (near Thiruvananthapuram), Kerala**.
 - **Deepwater Port:** Manmade structures that are used as ports or terminals to transport, store or handle oil and natural gas.
 - **Transshipment Port:** It is a transit hub where cargo is transferred from one ship to another while in transit to its final destination.
- It is built on a **design, build, finance, operate and transfer (DBFOT) model**.
 - **DBFOT model** is a **Public-Private Partnership (PPP)** model under which a private partner is responsible for:
 - **Designing, Building, Financing and Operating** the project during the contracted period.
 - **Transferring the project back to the public sector** after the end of contract period.

India's Port Sector

- India is the **16th largest maritime country in the world**.
- The Indian maritime sector contributes to **95% of India's trade by volume and 70% by value**.
- **Major Port:** Controlled by the **Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways** controls major ports in India.
- **Minor Port:** Controlled by State Maritime Boards/Governments. There are 200 non-major ports.
- There are **12 Major Ports in India:** Chennai, Cochin, Deendayal (Kandla), Jawaharlal Nehru (Nhava Sheva), Kolkata, Mormugao, Mumbai, New Mangalore, Paradip, V. O. Chidambaranar (Tuticorin), Visakhapatnam and Kamarajar Port Limited.
 - **13th -Vadhavn Port (under construction)**.
- India's **largest port by volume of cargo** handled is **Paradip Port, Odisha**.
- India owns over **30% global market share in the ship breaking industry** and is home to the **largest ship-breaking facility in the world at Alang (Gujarat)**.

Source:

- [Indian Express - Vizhinjam port](#)

Salt Pan Land Cleared for Dharavi Redevelopment Project

Context

The Maharashtra Government has approved allocation of 256 acres of salt pan land to rehabilitate slum dwellers under the Dharavi Redevelopment Project (DRP).

What are Salt Pan Lands ?

- They are **low-lying areas** where seawater flows in and evaporates, leaving behind **salt and minerals**.
- Under the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) notification of 2011, salt pans fall under **CRZ-1B**, which restricts economic activities except for salt extraction and natural gas exploration.



- **Ecological Importance of Salt Pans:**

- **Flood Protection:** Salt pans, together with mangroves serve as natural flood barriers absorbing excess water during heavy rainfall and high tides. This reduces the risk of severe waterlogging in Mumbai.
- **Biodiversity:** These areas support a diverse range of bird species and marine life, playing an important role in maintaining the local ecosystem.

What are Coastal Regulation Zones ?

- The coastal stretches of seas, bays, estuaries, creeks, rivers and back waters which are influenced by tidal action are declared as Coastal Regulation Zone.
- **CRZ are divided in 4 Categories:**
 - **CRZ (I-A):**
 - Ecologically Sensitive Areas like Mangroves, Salt Marshes, coral reefs and wildlife nesting sites. No new construction is permitted here.
 - **CRZ (I-B):**
 - Intertidal zone, i.e. area between High Tide Line and Low Tide Line.
 - **CRZ-II:**
 - Built-up urban areas where construction is only allowed on the landward side.
 - **CRZ-III:**
 - Land areas that are relatively undisturbed (viz. rural areas, etc.) and those which do not fall under CRZ-II.
 - No new construction is not permitted, except for repairs to existing buildings.
 - **CRZ-IV:**
 - The water area up to 12 nautical miles from the territorial waters and tidal influenced water bodies.
 - Local communities can traditionally fish in this area, but untreated sewage and solid waste are not allowed.

Source:

- [The Hindu - Salt pan lands](#)

3D Printed Train Station

Context

Recently Japan built a 3D printed train station in six hours.

What is 3D Printing?

- It is a process of creating three-dimensional objects from digital models by adding material layer by layer. It is also known as **additive manufacturing**.
- It is an additive process, in which layers of a material like plastic, composites or bio-materials are built up to construct objects that range in shape, size, rigidity and colour.
- It allows the **creation of complex shapes and structures with high precision**.



How 3D Printing is done?

- The basic principle of 3D printing involves building an object layer by layer.
- It starts with a digital model or a **computer-aided design (CAD)** file, which is sliced into thin cross-sectional layers.
- The 3D printer then reads these slices and deposits or **solidifies material one layer at a time**, gradually building up the final object.
- **Various 3D Printing Technologies:** Fused Deposition Modeling (FDM), Stereolithography (SLA), Selective Laser Sintering (SLS), Binder Jetting etc.

UPSC PYQ

Q. 3D printing" has applications in which of the following? (2018)

1. Preparation of confectionery items
2. Manufacture of bionic ears
3. Automotive industry
4. Reconstructive surgeries
5. Data processing technologies

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1, 3 and 4 only
- (b) 2, 3 and 5 only
- (c) 1 and 4 only]
- (d) 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

Answer: D

Source:

- [Indian Express - 3D printing](#)

News in Shorts

Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India (RGCCI)

- RGCCI has issued a caution to private and government hospitals regarding non-reporting of birth and death events.
- Presently only **90%** of birth/death events are registered across India. (Target - 100%).
- Due to delay in conducting census, **civil registration records** have become vital for estimating **population size, structure and distribution**.

About Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India (RGCCI)

- It is responsible for conducting India's decennial Census, compiling demographic and population data and overseeing the Civil Registration System (CRS) nationwide.
- It operates under the **Union Home Ministry**.
- It has developed CRS mobile app for easing registration of birth & deaths.

CRS Mobile App

- **Developed by:** Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India.
- It aims to simplify and accelerate the registration process, making it more accessible and efficient for citizens.
- Through the new app, individuals can conveniently register births and deaths at any time, from any location, in their state's official language.
- The **digital birth certificates will be a single document to prove the date of birth** for various services such as admission to educational institutions, government jobs and marriage registration.
- According to the **Registration of Births and Deaths (Amendment) Act, 2023**, all reported births and deaths in the country occurring from October 1, 2023, are to be digitally registered through the **Centre's CRS portal**.

Source:

- [The Hindu - RGCCI](#)

Rekla Race

- It is a bullock cart race popular in rural **Tamil Nadu**, during the **Pongal festival**.
- It involves racing bulls that are attached to small, one-person carts designed for speed.



Source:

- [The Hindu - Rekla](#)

Malabar Grey Hornbill

- A team of researchers from Kerala has been awarded the Future Conservationist Award by the **Conservation Leadership Programme (CLP)** for their project on conserving the Malabar Grey

Hornbill.

- CLP is a partnership between **Fauna & Flora International, BirdLife International and Wildlife Conservation Society.**
 - **Aim:** To build the capacity of young conservationists, particularly in developing countries where resources for conservation are often limited.

About Malabar Grey Hornbill

- It is **endemic to the Western Ghats** and associated hills of southern India.
- **Characteristics:**
 - They have a large beak but lack the **casque** that is prominent in some other hornbill species.
 - It has a black undertail with white tips, and a pale eyebrow.
 - They move around in pairs or small groups, feeding on **figs and other forest fruits.**
 - Their **loud cackling and laughing call** makes them familiar to people living in the region.
- **Habitat:** They are found mainly in dense forest and around rubber, arecanut or coffee plantations.
- **IUCN Status:** Vulnerable.
- India is home to **nine hornbill species**, including the Great Hornbill, Malabar Pied Hornbill, Rufous-necked Hornbill, Indian Grey Hornbill etc.



Source:

- [The Hindu - Malabar Grey Hornbill](#)

Mahatma Jyotiba Phule

- He was born on **11th April, 1827** in **Satara District, Maharashtra** in a Hindu Mali caste family.
- He was a prominent social reformer, thinker and activist in 19th-century India.
- He dedicated his life to fighting against caste-based discrimination and advocating for the rights of marginalized communities.
- Social reformer **Vithalrao Krishnaji Vandekar** honoured Jyotirao Phule with the title "**Mahatma**".
- **First Girls' School in India (1848):** Founded with wife **Savitribai Phule.**
 - He also opened night schools for **Workers and Farmers.**
- **Satyashodhak Samaj:**
 - **On 24 September 1873,** Phule formed Satyashodhak Samaj to focus on rights of depressed groups such women, the Shudra and the Dalit.
 - Through this samaj, he **opposed idolatry and denounced the caste system.**
 - Samaj also campaigned for the spread of rational thinking and rejected the need for priests.



- **Important Literature of Jyotiba Phule:**
 - **Gulamgiri** - Critiqued the caste system and the exploitation of lower castes.
 - **Shetkaryacha Aasud** - It highlighted the plight of farmers and advocated for land reforms.
 - Tritiya Ratna (Drama), Satsaar (Journal).

Source:

- [The Hindu - Jyotiba Phule](#)

What are Mesoscale Convective Systems (MCS)?

- According to a recent study Soil moisture levels can serve as an early warning signal for severe mesoscale convective systems (MCS)

About MCS

- MCS is a large, organized cluster of thunderstorms.
- It can cover areas **larger than England** and travel **hundreds of kilometres**.
- **Impact:**
 - It causes **intense rainfall**.
 - It leads to **flash floods, landslides, damage to infrastructure, livestock, and human lives**.
- **Rainfall Contribution:** In tropical regions, **MCSs account for 50% to 90%** of total rainfall.
- **Major Hotspots for MCSs:** West and Central Africa, northern India, Argentina, China and Great Plains of United States..

Source:

- [Down to Earth - MCS](#)

Alfalfa

- The Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) cleared the import of genetically modified **alfalfa hay** from the US but final approval from the Union Agriculture Ministry is pending.

About Alfalfa

- It is a **perennial flowering plant** in the legume family Fabaceae.
- It is used as **high-protein animal feed**, especially for cattle and horses.
- **Benefits:**
 - Nutrient-rich (proteins, vitamins, minerals).
 - Enhances **milk production** in dairy cattle.
 - Improves **soil fertility** through nitrogen fixation.



Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC)

- It is a statutory body under **Environment Protection Act (EPA) 1986**.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC)
- The committee is responsible for appraisal of proposals relating to release of genetically engineered (GE) organisms and products into the environment including experimental field trials.

- It is **chaired by** the Special Secretary/Additional Secretary of MoEF&CC.
- Use of the unapproved GM variant can attract a jail term of 5 years and fine of Rs 1 lakh under the **Environmental Protection Act ,1986**.

Source:

- [Economic Times - Alfalfa](#)

Gestational Diabetes Mellitus (GDM)

- It is a condition where **high blood sugar (glucose)** develops during pregnancy, in a woman who was **not previously diabetic**.
- It is usually diagnosed between **24–28 weeks of pregnancy**.
- **Cause:**
 - During pregnancy, hormones from the placenta interfere with the mother's insulin usage, leading to insulin resistance.
 - When the body can't produce enough insulin to manage this, blood sugar levels rise, causing GDM.
- **Risks:**
 - Increases chance of **type 2 diabetes** in the mother later in life.
 - Leads to metabolic disorders in the child.

Delhi Declaration on Diabetes

- It provides a **prevention strategy for GDM**.
- It was unveiled at the 18th Annual DIPSI (Diabetes in Pregnancy Study Group India) Conference held in March 2024.
- It advocates screening women at **eight weeks** of pregnancy for glucose intolerance.

Source:

- [The Hindu - Gestational Diabetes](#)

Editorial Summary

Social Security For Gig Workers

Context

The central scheme currently awaiting Cabinet approval is a comprehensive social security initiative designed for gig and platform workers in India.

Proposed Benefits in the Social Security Scheme for Gig Workers

- **Health Coverage under Ayushman Bharat (PM-JAY):** Gig workers will be covered under the **Ayushman Bharat** scheme, providing them with **₹5 lakh annual health insurance** for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization.
- **Registration on the eShram Portal:** Gig workers will be **registered on the eShram portal**, a national database for unorganised workers. This registration will enable access to **various government welfare schemes**, including accidental insurance and other social security benefits.
- **Transaction-Based Pension Scheme:** A **pension scheme linked to gig work transactions** is proposed:
 - A **Universal Account Number (UAN)** will be assigned to each worker.
 - This UAN will help **track earnings across multiple platforms**.
 - A portion of each transaction will go toward the worker's **pension contribution**.
 - Platform companies (like Zomato, Uber, etc.) will also **contribute a small percentage (1-2% of turnover, capped at 5%)** towards the workers' pension fund.

About Gig Workers

- Gig workers are individuals who **engage in short-term, temporary, or freelance work arrangements**, often through digital platforms or apps, rather than holding traditional long-term employment with a single employer.
- These workers typically perform specific tasks or projects on a flexible, as-needed basis, and are **usually paid per job or "gig" rather than receiving a regular salary**.
- In its working policy paper on the gig economy, NITI Aayog has made projections of the gig workforce **expanding to 23.5 million workers by 2030**.

Reasons Behind the Rise of Gig Workers

- **Technological Advancements:** The **development of digital platforms and mobile apps** has made it easier for workers to find and complete short-term jobs.
 - **Increased internet and smartphone penetration** have enabled more people to access gig work opportunities.
- **Economic Factors:** **Traditional job creation has been slow**, and gig work has become a crucial livelihood source for many job-seekers.
 - Gig work provides an **additional income stream for individuals** needing to supplement their earnings from other jobs or those between jobs.
- **Flexibility and Autonomy:** Gig work offers **flexibility in work hours and locations**, appealing to those seeking better work-life balance.
 - This led to increased labour participation by students/women by offering part-time work as per convenience.
- **Demand for On-Demand Services:** There is a growing **demand for on-demand services** such as ride-sharing, food delivery, and freelance work, driving the need for gig workers.

Work Issues Faced by Gig Workers

- **Revenue Sharing:** Gig workers often protest against the unfair revenue sharing models set by the platforms.
- **Financial Instability:** Earnings can be inconsistent and unpredictable, leading to financial instability.
- **Long Working Hours:** Many gig workers face long and irregular working hours **without additional compensation**.
- **Lack of Legal Protections:** The existing legal framework is not well-suited to address the complexities of gig work, as it is **based on traditional employer-employee relationships**.
 - Platforms classify gig workers as independent contractors, which excludes them from benefits and protections available to traditional employees.
- **No Access to Benefits:** Gig workers lack access to essential social security benefits such as health insurance, paid leave, and retirement plans.
 - Overwork and lack of safety regulations can lead to accidents and health issues.

State government Initiatives for Gig Worker in India

- **Rajasthan** enacted the *Platform-Based Gig Workers (Registration and Welfare) Act, 2023*, mandating registration, transaction-based welfare cess, and a grievance redressal system for gig workers.
- **Karnataka** introduced the *Platform-Based Gig Workers (Social Security and Welfare) Bill, 2024*, which ensures algorithmic transparency, fair contracts, and aggregator contributions to a welfare board.
- **Tamil Nadu** launched a scheme offering **₹20,000 subsidies for e-scooters, insurance coverage, and worker lounges** for registered gig workers.
- **Andhra Pradesh** runs the *YSR Vahana Mitra Scheme*, providing ₹10,000 annually to self-employed drivers for vehicle maintenance and insurance.

Flaws in the Existing System

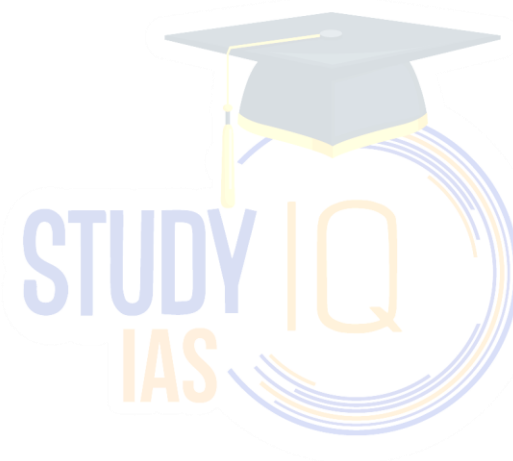
- **Lack of Alignment with International Standards:** India has not ratified the **ILO's (International Labour Organisation) Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102)**, reflecting weak commitment to universal social protection.
- **Ambiguities in the Social Security Code, 2020:** The Code provides **unclear definitions** of gig and platform workers.
 - **Diluted safeguards** and **centralised oversight** have led to **delays in implementation**, limiting its impact on ground.
- **Dysfunctional Welfare Boards:** Welfare Boards, the main distribution mechanism for benefits, have proved **inefficient and opaque**:
 - **₹70,744 crore** in cess funds for construction workers remain unused.
 - In **Tamil Nadu**, ₹221.8 crore in dues were not remitted by 99 local bodies.
 - In **Kerala**, only **5 out of 16** boards were found functional; some reported **zero beneficiaries**.
- **Fragmented and Piecemeal Approach:** Targeted schemes for specific sectors (e.g., beedi workers, gig workers) create **inequity** and fail to address the **shared precarity** of informal labour.
 - Such an approach **neglects intersectionality** and leads to **exclusion** of equally vulnerable groups like domestic workers.
- **Overreliance on Gig Work as a Solution:** The assumption that gig work will formalise informal labour is **flawed**.
 - Most gig jobs lack **security, stable income, and employer accountability**, which are core features of formal employment.
- **Ineffective Use of Data and Platforms:** While initiatives like **eShram** aim to register informal workers, the **lack of integration with welfare delivery mechanisms** limits real benefits.

- Absence of **real-time data sharing** across departments weakens targeting and tracking.

What Needs to Be Done?

- **Universal Social Protection Floor:** Shift from targeted schemes to a **rights-based, universal framework**, ensuring **minimum social security for all workers**, regardless of category.
- **Strengthen and Reform Welfare Boards:** Ensure **transparency, fund utilisation, and real-time audits** of Welfare Boards.
 - Introduce **performance-based reviews** and **technology-driven tracking** of beneficiaries.
- **Decentralised yet Coordinated Governance:** Leverage the **flexibility given to states** under the Code to **innovate and adapt** schemes locally while ensuring **national minimum standards**.
- **Clarify Legal Definitions:** Amend the Code to provide **clear, inclusive definitions** of gig, platform, and other informal workers to reduce ambiguity.
- **Integration of Databases and Portals:** Link **eShram, Ayushman Bharat**, and **pension accounts** with **labour management systems** for better tracking and delivery of benefits.
- **Continuous Monitoring and Feedback Mechanisms:** Institutionalise **worker feedback loops** and **social audits** to improve design and delivery of schemes.

Source: [The Hindu: Drop the piecemeal ways to social security for workers](#)



Are existing mechanisms effective in combating judicial corruption?

Context

Judicial corruption undermines public trust and weakens the foundation of rule of law. India has put in place several formal and informal mechanisms to uphold judicial integrity and accountability. However, the effectiveness of these mechanisms remains a subject of debate.

More in News

- According to the latest C-Voter-India Today survey:
 - Only about 30% of people surveyed said they fully trust the judiciary.
 - 12% trust it only somewhat.
 - Nearly **48% reported having no trust in it at all.**

Current Mechanisms to Combat Judicial Corruption

Mechanism	Description	Legal Basis / Authority	Limitations
Impeachment Process	Removal of judges on grounds of proven misbehaviour or incapacity through a rigorous parliamentary procedure.	Article 124(4) & (5), Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968	Rarely used; politically difficult; no judge has ever been impeached successfully.
In-House Inquiry Procedure	Internal mechanism to examine complaints against judges via a committee of judges; recommendations may include warnings or resignation.	Established by Supreme Court (1997 guidelines)	Non-statutory; lacks transparency; no fixed standards for reporting findings publicly.
Contempt of Court Law	Used to prevent actions that lower the authority of the judiciary or obstruct the administration of justice.	Contempt of Courts Act, 1971	Often invoked to silence criticism; can suppress good-faith scrutiny of the judiciary.
Collegium System (Appointments)	Judges appoint judges; High Courts and Supreme Court collegiums make recommendations; executive can return names.	Evolved through judicial decisions (e.g., 1993 SC)	Lacks transparency and accountability; executive interference in appointments persists.

Financial Disclosure (Ethics Practice)	Judges are encouraged to voluntarily declare their assets; some courts publish these declarations.	Norm-based; not statutory	No legal compulsion; inconsistent disclosures; lacks verification mechanism.
Judicial Standards & Accountability Bill	Aimed to institutionalize enforceable conduct standards and oversight committees for judges.	Introduced in 2010 (Lapsed in 2014)	Never passed; hence, no formal code of conduct or statutory grievance redressal body for the judiciary.
CAG, RTI & Media Vigilance	CAG reports reveal administrative lapses; RTI allows limited access to court info; media pressure spurs action.	RTI Act, 2005; Comptroller & Auditor General reports	Indirect and reactive; RTI coverage is limited; often depends on media/public outrage.

Arguments in Favour (Mechanisms Are Effective to Some Extent)

- **Impeachment preserves judicial independence:** The high threshold for impeachment protects judges from political vendetta, maintaining separation of powers.
- **In-house inquiry procedure exists:** The judiciary has established an internal mechanism to deal with misconduct without external interference, allowing some checks and balances.
- **Instances of transparency are increasing:** The Supreme Court's proactive disclosure (e.g., in the Justice Varma case) signals a shift towards greater openness.
- **Scope for collegium transparency has emerged:** Under CJI D.Y. Chandrachud, collegium recommendations were publicly explained — a move toward accountability (though now discontinued).
- **Checks through informal peer systems:** The legal fraternity operates via peer review and whispers of misconduct often circulate long before formal action, hinting at informal checks.

Arguments Against (Mechanisms Are Ineffective or Weak)

- **Impeachment is nearly impossible:** The political threshold (two-thirds majority) makes impeachment unviable as a regular mechanism for ensuring accountability.
 - E.g., impeachment and removal proceedings were initiated **against a Supreme Court or High Court Judge 5 times** but **no judge has been removed** by both Houses and President's order.
- **In-house inquiries lack transparency and enforceability:** These are opaque, discretionary, and often fail to build public trust unless pressured by media or public speculation.
- **Delay and weak enforcement in corruption cases:** Cases like Justice Nirmal Yadav's acquittal after 15 years reflect systemic delays and poor institutional capacity to secure convictions.

- **Justice Nirmal Yadav's acquittal:** In the 2008 "cash-at-judge's-door" scandal, ₹15 lakh intended for Justice Nirmal Yadav was mistakenly delivered to another judge, leading to a CBI investigation; she was later acquitted due to insufficient evidence.

- **Government interference in appointments:** The executive's ability to block or delay collegium recommendations reduces the independence and effectiveness of appointments.
- **No enforceable judicial standards:** Lack of a framework mandating disclosures (e.g., on relatives practising in same courts) undermines integrity.
- **Contempt laws stifle scrutiny:** Fear of contempt discourages open criticism of the judiciary, even if aimed at genuine reform or highlighting misconduct.

Why Public Trust in the Judiciary is Declining

- **Perceived Lack of Accountability:** Despite serious allegations, very few judges have been successfully impeached or held accountable, creating a perception of impunity within the judiciary.
- **Media Trials & Public Perception:** Allegations against judges, like in the cases of Justice Yashwant Varma and Nirmal Yadav, receive widespread media coverage, often leading to trial by media and erosion of judicial dignity before due process is followed.
- **Opaque In-House Mechanisms:** Internal judicial inquiries lack transparency, making it difficult for the public to trust that complaints are being addressed fairly and objectively.
- **Delay in Delivery of Justice:** With the government as the largest litigant and significant pendency of cases, the slow pace of justice leads to frustration and distrust among common citizens.
- **Lack of Public Engagement:** The belief that people fully trust the judiciary may not reflect the ground reality, especially in rural and marginalised communities.
- **Blurring Lines Between Impropriety and Corruption:** The inability to clearly distinguish between ethical lapses and criminal misconduct further blurs public understanding and fuels cynicism.

What Needs to Be Done

- **Strengthen and Streamline Accountability Mechanisms:** Reform the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968 to ensure time-bound, transparent, and independent investigation into judicial misconduct.
- **Public Disclosure with Due Process:** Maintain confidentiality during inquiries, but ensure post-inquiry outcomes are made public with clear reasoning to build trust.
- **Protect Judicial Independence from Executive Overreach:** Avoid premature police involvement without preliminary institutional scrutiny to uphold the separation of powers.
- **Sensitize Media & Promote Responsible Reporting:** Encourage media to respect judicial propriety and refrain from speculative or sensationalist reporting during ongoing inquiries.
- **Engage in Judicial Outreach and Transparency:** Increase public interface, legal awareness drives, and institutional communication about court processes and reforms.
- **Distinguish Corruption from Impropriety:** Institutionalise the difference between ethical lapses and proven corruption with clear procedures and evidence-based assessment.

Sources:

- [The Hindu: Are existing mechanisms effective in combating judicial corruption?](#)
- [Indian Express: Justice for the Judge](#)

EU Plans to Slash GDPR- Lessons for India

Context

- The **European Commission is considering revising or “slashing” the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)** to make it more practical and less burdensome.
 - The proposed revisions aim to simplify compliance mechanisms without compromising data protection principles.

Why Is the EU Planning to Modify GDPR?

- **High Compliance Burden:** A study by the **German Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GCCI)** found **75%** of businesses still struggle with compliance.
- **Negative Impact on Innovation:** GDPR forced nearly **one-third of apps** on Google Play Store to shut down; **entry of new apps** fell by half post-implementation.
- **Reduced Profit Margins:** An Oxford University paper (2022) reported **8.1% decline in profits** for European businesses post-GDPR.

What Is India’s Equivalent Law?

- **Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 (DPDPA):**
 - Passed by Parliament in August 2023
 - Aims to regulate the processing of personal data by public and private entities

What Are the Issues with India’s Draft Rules Under DPDPA?

- **No ‘Legitimate Interest’ Clause:** GDPR allows data use without consent for fraud prevention, marketing, or journalism.
 - DPDPA omits this, requiring fresh consent each time — **creates operational chaos**.
- **No ‘Contractual Necessity’ Clause:** GDPR allows data use to fulfill contracts (e.g., delivery details, ticket bookings).
 - DPDPA **blocks even third-party logistics companies** from using recipient data without prior consent.
 - Hampers **e-commerce, BPOs, logistics, and fintech** sectors.
- **Consent Fatigue:** Users may get **flooded with consent pop-ups**, leading to blind rejection.
 - Ironically, this may **weaken privacy and security** instead of strengthening them.
- **Over-regulation May Kill Innovation:** Instead of fostering a startup-friendly data regime, DPDPA risks becoming **more stringent than GDPR**, choking innovation and ease of doing business.

What India Needs to Do

- **Include “Legitimate Interest” Clause:** Allow essential services (security alerts, fraud detection, journalism) without repeated consent requests.
- **Add “Contractual Necessity” as Legal Basis:** Enable smooth processing of data for tasks involving third parties (e.g., delivery services, customer care).
- **Balance Compliance and Innovation:** Avoid making DPDPA a **compliance-heavy regime** that stifles startups and tech adoption.
- **Adopt a Risk-Based, Tiered Approach:** Differentiate obligations based on the **nature and sensitivity** of data, not a one-size-fits-all rule.

Conclusion

India must learn from the EU’s experience with GDPR. Without fundamental amendments to DPDPA, **compliance overload** may backfire, hurting **users, startups, and national digital innovation**. A **pragmatic, business- and citizen-friendly approach** is the need of the hour.

Source: Indian Express: Data Wrapped In Red Tape