



Supreme Court's Remarkable Case Disposal Surge in 2023

[Source: TH](#)

Why in News?

In a notable development, the [Supreme Court\(SC\) of India](#) has disclosed a **substantial increase in the disposal of cases** during the year 2023, surpassing the **number of cases registered** during the same period.

What are the Factors that Contributed to the High Disposal of Cases?

- The SC disposed of 52,191 cases between January 1 and December 15, 2023, compared to 49,191 cases registered during the same period.
- The **Integrated Case Management Information System (ICMIS)**, implemented in 2017, played a crucial role in achieving the highest disposal numbers.
- The [Chief Justice of India](#) streamlined the filing-to-listing timeframe, ensuring cases were **listed within five days**, compared to the previous 10-day requirement.
 - Matters related to [bail](#), [habeas corpus](#), [demolition](#), and [anticipatory bail](#) were processed within a day and promptly listed in courts, prioritizing the right to liberty.
- Special Benches were constituted, including those dealing with the death penalty.

What is Integrated Case Management Information System (ICMIS)?

- ICMIS is a next-generation hybrid **database** adopted by the SC. It integrates various information sources related to cases, such as case status, orders, judgments, appeals, etc.
- ICMIS enables litigants **to access and retrieve information online through a user-friendly** interface. It also provides real-time updates on the progress of cases.
- ICMIS helps reduce manipulation and delay in case filing and disposal. It also facilitates the online filing of cases and documents through e-filing portals.

What are the Other Initiatives Related to Reduce Pendency of Cases?

- **e-Courts:**
 - The Government of India has initiated the [e-Courts Integrated Mission Mode](#) Project to **computerize District and subordinate courts**, enhancing access to justice through technology.
 - Launched in 2007 as part of the [National e-Governance Plan](#), it collaborates with the **e-Committee Supreme Court of India and the Department of Justice**.
 - The project progressed in two phases, with **Phase I from 2011-2015 and Phase II starting in 2015**, focusing on the computerization of District and Subordinate courts.
- **Fast Track Special Courts (FTSCs):**
 - [FTSCs](#) were established to expedite **trials for sexual offenses**, especially those under the [Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act \(POCSO Act\)](#), addressing delays in regular courts.

- Enacted through the **Criminal Law (Amendment) Act in 2018**, operates under the **Department of Justice, Ministry of Law & Justice**.
- **Supreme Court Portal for Assistance in Court's Efficiency (SUPACE):**
 - **SUPACE**, a tool designed for judges, functions as a **fact and law collection system**, providing relevant **information for decision-making**. While it doesn't make decisions itself, it processes facts for judges seeking input in decision-making.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Prelims

Q. With reference to the Indian judiciary, consider the following statements: (2021)

1. Any retired judge of the Supreme Court of India can be called back to sit and act as a Supreme Court judge by the Chief Justice of India with the prior permission of the President of India.
2. A High Court in India has the power to review its own judgement as the Supreme Court does.

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

Ans: (c)

India-US Relations

For Prelims: [India-US Relations](#), [United Nations](#), [G-20](#), [Association of Southeast Asian Nations \(ASEAN\) Regional Forum](#), [International Monetary Fund](#), [World Bank](#), and [World Trade Organization](#).

For Mains: India US relations - recent development, geopolitical challenges and way forward

Source: [HT](#)

Why in News?

Recently, the Prime Minister (PM) of India has stated that, despite occasional issues, **India and the US have been on a positive trajectory in relations**.

- The PM emphasized a deepening engagement, understanding, and friendship between the two nations, driven by national interest.

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How have been India's Relations with the US?

▪ About:

- The U.S.-India strategic partnership is **founded on shared values including a commitment to democracy** and upholding the rules-based international system.
- Both have shared interests in promoting global security, stability, and economic prosperity through trade, investment, and connectivity.

▪ Economic Relations:

- The U.S. has emerged as India's biggest trading partner in 2022-23 on account of increasing economic ties between the two countries.
- The bilateral trade between India and the U.S. has increased by 7.65% to USD 128.55 in 2022-23 as against **USD 119.5 billion in 2021-22**.
 - Exports to the U.S. rose by 2.81% to USD 78.31 billion in 2022-23 as against USD 76.18 billion in 2021-22, while imports grew by about 16% to USD 50.24 billion.

▪ International Cooperations:

- India and the United States cooperate closely at multilateral organizations, including the [United Nations](#), [G-20](#), [Association of Southeast Asian Nations \(ASEAN\) Regional Forum](#), [International Monetary Fund](#), [World Bank](#), and [World Trade Organization](#).
- The United States welcomed India joining the UN Security Council in 2021 for a two-year term and supports a reformed UN Security Council that includes India as a permanent member.
- India is also one of twelve countries partnering with the United States on the [Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity \(IPEF\)](#).
- India is a member of the [Indian Ocean Rim Association \(IORA\)](#), at which the United States is a dialogue partner.
- In 2021, the United States joined the International Solar Alliance headquartered in India,

and in 2022 the [United States Agency for International Development \(USAID\)](#).

▪ **Defence Cooperation:**

- India has now signed all **four foundational agreements with the US**.
 - The [Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement \(LEMOA\)](#) in 2016,
 - the [Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement \(COMCASA\)](#) in 2018,
 - The [Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement for Geo-Spatial cooperation \(BECA\)](#) in 2020.
 - While the **General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA)** was signed a long time ago, an extension to it, the Industrial Security Annex (ISA), was signed in 2019
- India, which could not access **US weapons during the Cold War**, has bought USD 20 billion worth of arms over the last two decades.
 - However, the incentive for the US is helping India reduce its historical dependence on Russia for its military supplies.
- The armed forces of India and the US engage in extensive bilateral military exercises ([Yuddha Aabyas](#), [Vajra Prahar](#)) and minilateral ones with the four partners in the [Quad Forum \(Malabar\)](#).
- Another grouping in the Middle East - I2U2 involving India, Israel, UAE and the US is being termed as the [new Quad](#).

▪ **Space and Science and Technology:**

- [Indian Space Research Organization \(ISRO\)](#) and US National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) are developing a microwave remote sensing satellite for Earth observation, [NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar \(NISAR\)](#).
- In June 2023 ISRO signed with NASA the [Artemis Accords](#) to participate in peaceful and sustainable civil exploration of outer space.
- [ICET](#) is a joint initiative by the National Security Advisors of the US and India to foster cooperation and innovation in key technology domains such as **AI, quantum, telecom, space, biotech, semiconductors**, and defence. It was launched in January 2023.

What are the Major Challenges between India and the US?

▪ **US Criticism of India's Foreign Policy:**

- If the Indian elite has long seen the world through the lens of non-alignment, alliance relationships have been at the heart of US' foreign policy since the [Second World War](#).
 - India's policy of nonalignment especially during the Cold War has always been a point of concern for the West, especially the US.
- After the 9/11 attacks, the US asked India to dispatch troops to Afghanistan; the Indian military vetoed the request.
 - When the US invaded Iraq in 2003, even then India's erstwhile PM withheld military support.
- Even today, India refuses to toe the American line on the Russian-Ukraine war and its [import of cheap Russian oil](#) continues to break records.
 - Pro-US voices have often been raised demanding India to get "on the right side of history".

▪ **India's Engagement with US Adversaries:**

- India has criticised the US decision to block Iranian and Venezuelan oil from the open market.
- India has actively worked to **bring Iran into the SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organization)**.

▪ **US' Criticism of India's Democracy:**

- Various US organisations and foundations, from time to time, with the tacit support of some Congressmen and Senators, come out with reports questioning the present state of democratic discourse, press and religious freedom and condition of the minorities in India.
 - Some of them include the [International Religious Freedom Report 2023](#) and the [Human Rights Report on India 2021](#) by the US State Department.

▪ **Economic Tensions:**

- The [Atmanirbhar Bharat Campaign](#) has exacerbated the view in the US that India is increasingly becoming a protectionist closed market economy.

- Effective in June 2019, the USA decided to withdraw duty-free benefits to Indian exporters **under the [GSP \(Generalized System of Preferences\) programme](#)** affecting India's export-oriented sectors such as pharma, textiles, agri products and automotive parts.

Way Forward

- The partnership between the two countries is critical for ensuring a free, open, and rules-bound Indo-Pacific region.
- The unparalleled Demographic Dividend provides enormous opportunities for the US and Indian firms for technology transfer, manufacturing, trade and investment.
- India is emerging as a leading player in an international system that is undergoing an unprecedented transformation. It shall use its present situation to explore opportunities to further its vital interests.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Q. 'What introduces friction into the ties between India and the United States is that Washington is still unable to find for India a position in its global strategy, which would satisfy India's National self-esteem and ambitions'. Explain with suitable examples. **(2019)**

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