



City Matters

POTHoles IN JAIPUR

A Growing Threat to Public Safety



www.google.com

Jaipur, known for its planned roads and rich heritage, is facing a serious problem of potholes and sinkholes. Instead of smooth roads, many parts of the city are now marked by large craters that make travel unsafe. The problem has worsened even before the monsoon, raising questions about road quality, drainage, and civic maintenance. Every year, roads are repaired, but many develop potholes again after the first spell of rain, pointing to deeper structural and governance issues.

Some of the biggest examples are on Tonk Road near Moti Doongri and Shipra Path, where huge sinkholes, reportedly around 20 feet deep, suddenly appeared on busy roads. These roads carry thousands of vehicles every day, making such collapses a major threat to public safety. Blocked sewer lines, poor drainage, waterlogging, and leaking underground utilities have weakened the road foundation, leading to these dangerous cave-ins.

The problem is not limited to these roads. Motorists have also reported dangerous potholes in Johri Bazar, Hawa Mahal, and Gopalpura Bypass. Drivers are forced to slow down or make sudden manoeuvres to avoid damaged stretches, increasing the risk of accidents. Two-wheeler riders are particularly vulnerable, while potholes also lead to traffic congestion, vehicle damage, delays in emergency services, and losses for businesses.

Public frustration has reached a point where residents have begun naming major potholes after their local MLAs to protest civic negligence and demand immediate repairs. This symbolic act reflects growing dissatisfaction with repeated complaints being met only with temporary patchwork repairs that fail soon after rainfall.

The recurring problem highlights weaknesses in urban governance. Poor-quality road construction, repeated digging by utility agencies, weak coordination among departments, and inadequate supervision have all contributed to the rapid deterioration of roads. Unless these root causes are addressed, potholes will continue to reappear every year.

In the past, several measures to improve accountability were suggested but never implemented. One proposal recommended that contractors sign a defect liability agreement with the government agency and deposit a security amount that could be forfeited if roads developed defects during the liability period. Such a system would have encouraged better construction quality and ensured that contractors remained responsible for their work. Unfortunately, the proposal did not move forward.

Another suggestion was to publicly display the names of the contractor and supervising engineers on roadside information boards. If roads deteriorated prematurely, citizens would know who was responsible. This “naming and shaming” approach was intended to improve transparency and accountability but was also never adopted.

Jaipur needs a long-term strategy instead of short-term repairs. Authorities should carry out regular pre-monsoon inspections, maintain drains and sewer lines, use high-quality construction materials, and enforce strict quality control. Contractors should be held accountable through defect liability clauses and performance guarantees, while technology such as GIS-based road monitoring and mobile apps can help citizens report potholes and ensure timely repairs.

Potholes are not merely an inconvenience – they are a serious public safety issue. A city aspiring to be a world-class tourism and investment destination must ensure safe, durable, and well-maintained roads for its residents and visitors.

Pradeep S. Mehta

Pradeep S Mehta, Secretary General

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Beyond the Digital Iron Curtain

As Russia tightens internet controls, many citizens are using VPNs, multiple phones and alternative applications to access blocked foreign platforms. Users switch between state-backed and foreign apps while avoiding surveillance concerns.

Restrictions have disrupted services and increased public frustration amid economic pressures and war fatigue. VPN use has surged sharply, while authorities continue promoting “digital sovereignty,” arguing that internet controls are necessary during Russia’s confrontation with the West. (FP, 14.06.26)

When Lessons Lose Their Way

More than 1,600 errors have been identified in newly introduced Odia textbooks for Classes I to VIII in Odisha (India) govt schools.



Mistakes include describing Isaac Newton as a pilot and misidentifying famous landmarks.

Errors were found across several subjects and languages. The government attributed the mistakes to hurried preparation under the new education policy and has issued corrections to schools to prevent adverse effects on students. (IT, 18.06.26)

When Childhood Logs Off

Malaysia has begun enforcing a ban on social media accounts for children under 16. Major platforms must introduce age-verification systems and restrict underage users. Existing users identified as minors will be given time to download their data. Companies violating the rules face heavy penalties.

The government says the measure protects children from harmful content and cyberbullying, while critics and technology firms warn it could raise privacy concerns and drive teenagers elsewhere. (TH, 01.06.26)



Fading Footprints of Freedom

Maulana Barkatullah, born in Bhopal, MP, (India) in 1859, was a prominent revolutionary who served as Prime Minister of India’s first government-in-exile formed in Kabul in 1915. He travelled extensively to build international support against British rule and advocated Hindu-Muslim unity.

Historians fear his legacy is fading amid debates over removing his name from a university. His final wish to be buried in a free India remains unfulfilled. (TH, 06.06.26)

The Colours Outlive the Canvas

British artist David Hockney, renowned for his vibrant paintings of California and contributions to pop art, has died at 88. Born in northern England, he gained



international recognition for his depictions of swimming pools, landscapes and modern life.

His work achieved record auction prices and earned global acclaim. Despite his success, Hockney remained dedicated to painting throughout his life, producing influential works until his final years. (BBC, 12.06.26)

A Heart Crosses Borders

A 14-year-old Sudanese boy received a life-saving heart transplant in Delhi after a brain-dead woman from Panchkula became an organ donor. The donor’s family consented to

donation, enabling a rapid retrieval and transport operation.

Doctors successfully completed the transplant within the critical timeframe, giving the teenager a second chance at life. (ToI, 04.05.26)

Many Hands, One Forest (V-4)

Serbian birdwatchers used crowdfunding to purchase and preserve a two-hectare woodland known as Nightingale’s Forest. The initiative prevented deforestation and protected diverse wildlife habitats.



The campaign reflects growing environmental awareness in Serbia, with conservationists hoping similar community-driven efforts will safeguard green spaces across the country. (AP News, 03.05.26)

97 and Standing Taller

Advances in minimally invasive surgery and anaesthesia are enabling successful spinal and orthopaedic procedures among elderly patients.

Cases such as 93-year-old Arnavaz Contractor and other nonagenarians demonstrate that doctors increasingly assess fitness rather than age alone. These surgeries focus on restoring mobility, independence and quality of life for older adults. (MD, 01.04.26)

Screens Shape Beginnings

Research by AIIMS Delhi suggests excessive screen exposure during infancy may be associated with autism-like behaviours by age three.

Although the findings do not establish direct causation, experts warn that prolonged digital exposure during critical developmental stages may affect social and communication skills, highlighting the importance of limiting screen time in early childhood. (ToI, 04.05.26)

One Whale, Many Questions

The death of Timmy, a stranded humpback whale rescued from German waters, has reignited debate over animal welfare. Despite expert advice favouring euthanasia due to poor health, public pressure led to an expensive rescue attempt.

Scientists argue that welfare considerations should take precedence over emotional responses when animals face prolonged suffering. (TG, 19.05.26)

Cutting the String of Danger

The sale, storage, and use of Chinese manja — nylon or glass-coated kite strings —are banned across India due to risks to people, birds, and the environment. The National Green Tribunal prohibited its use, and states including Rajasthan have imposed strict restrictions.

Violators can face heavy fines and imprisonment of up to seven years under the Environment (Protection) Act and relevant state laws. (ETV Bharat, 25.05.26)

A Homecoming Beyond Judgment

A retired judge in Meerut (India) celebrated his daughter's return after her divorce with drums, garlands and sweets, challenging the stigma around marital separation.



Gyanendra Kumar Sharma said his daughter's dignity mattered more than social expectations.

Family members wore "I love my daughter" T-shirts. Pranita Vashistha, who alleged harassment in her marriage, returned home after the court granted divorce, with the family choosing not to seek alimony. (Tol, 06.04.26)

Love Leaves Pawprints

A seaside pet cemetery near Visakhapatnam's (India) Appughar honours beloved pets with poetic epitaphs expressing grief, love and hopes of reunion. Memorial stones describe pets as family members, with messages such as "Run free, my baby" and "You left paw prints on our hearts."

The graves reflect the deep emotional bond between humans and pets, transforming a sandy shoreline into a place of remembrance and devotion. (Tol, 05.04.26)

A Masterpiece Beyond Measure

Raja Ravi Varma's Yashoda and Krishna sold for a record ₹167.2 crore at auction, becoming the most expensive modern Indian



artwork ever sold. Industrialist Cyrus Poonawalla acquired the painting, calling it a national treasure deserving public display.

The sale surpassed M.F. Husain's previous record. Varma, known for blending European techniques with Indian themes, also popularised Hindu imagery through affordable prints. (IE, 02.04.26)

500 Pratap Memorials Planned

The 4,500 figure likely refers to a landmark associated with Indian history rather than a specific count of Maharana Pratap statues.

While exact global counts for his monuments are unavailable, a massive national campaign, the Maharana Pratap Smarak Abhiyan, is currently installing 500 significant metallic statues (each 12 feet tall and weighing 3,100 kg) across India. (DB, 16.06.26)

Viral Wedding Shocks Social Media

A viral video from Uttar Pradesh (India) has sparked widespread discussion after a man reportedly married his mother-in-law following

his wife's death. The ceremony, held in a local court, was attended by family members, and the couple was seen seeking blessings from elders.

While the unusual relationship drew mixed reactions on social media, reports suggest the marriage was a consensual family decision. (Tol, 08.06.26)

India's Shift from Cure to Care

Wellness is becoming a way of life in India, with prevention replacing treatment as the preferred approach to healthcare.



Preventive care now accounts for 15 percent of medical spending, driven by greater health awareness after the pandemic, higher incomes, and digital tools.

Government initiatives such as Fit India and Poshan Abhiyaan are reinforcing this shift toward healthier lifestyles. (DB, 15.06.26)

Where Brooms Build Bridges

The Russian Embassy in New Delhi organised a cleanliness drive combining Russia's "Subotnik" tradition with India's Swachh Bharat mission. Russian diplomats, embassy staff, and volunteers cleaned areas around the embassy, promoting environmental awareness and civic responsibility.



The initiative symbolised India-Russia friendship and highlighted shared values of community service and public participation. (DP, 27.04.26)

Women Transform Rural Livelihoods

Across rural India, women entrepreneurs are transforming local resources into sustainable businesses that strengthen village economies. From the Thar Desert to Kerala, they are creating value from camel milk, waste milk, coconut shells, indigenous spices and traditional crafts.

Their enterprises are connecting rural products with global markets while generating livelihoods for farmers, artisans and pastoral communities.



(www.yourstory.com, 19.06.26)

Delhi Roads Get QR Codes

Delhi's Public Works Department is launching 'Know Your Road', enabling residents to report road problems by scanning QR codes with their smartphones.

Nearly 2,500 QR codes will be installed on PWD-managed roads within 60 days, providing access to maintenance records, contractor details and complaint tracking, while improving transparency, accountability and public participation in road monitoring.

(ET, 22.06.26)

Ranchi Boy Swims Palk Strait

Seven-year-old Ishank Singh from Ranchi became the world's youngest swimmer to cross the 29-km Palk Strait between Sri Lanka and Tamil Nadu.



Completing the swim in nine hours and 50 minutes, he earned recognition as the youngest and fastest Palk Strait swimmer. Introduced to swimming at an early age, Ishank is already preparing for future achievements.

(NoA, 01.05.26)

Ancient Pit Houses Unearthed

Archaeologists discovered 3,500-year-old Neolithic pit houses near Coimbatore, revealing insights into ancient agro-pastoral communities. The pits may have served as grain storage, kitchens or protection from disasters.

Excavations uncovered infant burials, pottery, tools and evidence of livestock rearing and cultivation, highlighting sophisticated lifestyles and seasonal settlements in the region.

(ToI, 03.05.26)

PM Modi on Somnath Renewal

PM Modi reflected on the Somnath Temple's 75-year journey from 'ruins to renewal,' calling it a timeless symbol of India's unbroken civilisational spirit.



He noted that its restoration represents not just the rebuilding of a shrine, but the revival of national pride, cultural confidence, and an unconquerable heritage.

(TH, 08.05.26)

A Tribute That Turned Political

The BJP targeted Congress leader Rahul Gandhi after senior Congress MP Shashi Tharoor praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi's diplomacy and leadership following his meeting with US President Donald Trump at the G7 Summit in France.

Tharoor lauded Modi's handling of discussions on the safety of Indian seafarers, his vision, oratory, and infrastructure achievements. Trump also described Modi as a "tough negotiator" after their bilateral meeting.

(HT, 20.06.26)

Delhi-Dehradun Expressway Opens

PM Modi inaugurated the 11,963-crore Delhi-Dehradun Expressway, reducing travel time between the two cities from six hours to about three.

The 213-km corridor connects Delhi and Dehradun and includes a 12-km elevated wildlife corridor between Asharodi and Ganeshpur, promoting faster travel and environmental conservation.

(CC, 19.04.26)

Boy Targets Crocodiles Reel

A boy in Kota allegedly threw firecrackers at crocodiles basking near the Chandralohi river to create a social media reel. The explosions frightened the animals, forcing them back into the water.

The Forest Department had lodged an FIR at Borkheda police station. Strict action is likely under wildlife protection laws for disturbing protected animals.

(DB, 12.04.26)

Where Every Birth Grows a Forest

Sikkim's Mero Rukh Mero Santati initiative encourages families to plant 108 trees when a child is born. The



programme aims to strengthen the emotional bond between children and nature while increasing the state's green cover.

The initiative has become a celebrated environmental tradition linking personal milestones with ecological conservation.

(SD, 01.07.26)

RU Launches Employability Courses

Rajasthan University has introduced five new undergraduate programmes under the Apprenticeship Embedded Degree Programme at Rajasthan College, Maharani College and Commerce College.

New programmes in content writing, BFSI, and HR operations will offer apprenticeship training and stipends in the third year, enhancing employability, strengthening industry-academia collaboration, and preparing students for emerging careers. (Tol, 03.06.26)

Raj Targets 43,000 Gas Links

The Rajasthan government aims to provide domestic piped natural gas connections to 43,000 households. Authorities have



identified 132 LPG-free zones and directed gas distribution companies to accelerate connections.

The initiative will reduce dependence on LPG cylinders, improve energy access and encourage wider adoption of piped gas services. (Tol, 02.06.26)

Helmet Drive Launched

Jaipur traffic police launched a helmet awareness campaign to promote road safety among two-wheeler riders. Officials urged commuters to wear ISI-certified helmets to reduce fatalities in road accidents. Riders without helmets were counselled on safe driving practices and the importance of protective gear.

Traffic personnel also distributed certified helmets during the campaign, which forms part of the state government's efforts to reduce accidents and encourage safer commuting. (Tol, 02.06.26)

AI Traffic Signals in Jaipur

Jaipur will introduce AI-powered traffic signals at major intersections to improve traffic flow and road safety. Cameras will monitor vehicle density and automatically adjust signal timings.



The system can also detect violations such as helmet and seatbelt non-compliance. After the successful pilot at Udaipur's Fatehpura Circle, authorities plan wider implementation through an integrated traffic command centre. (ETV Bharat, 16.06.26)

Rail Projects Ease Jaipur Junction

North Western Railway is implementing several projects to reduce congestion at Jaipur Junction, including a new Hasanpura-side entry, redevelopment of Gandhi Nagar station, a maintenance depot at Khatipura and satellite terminals.

These initiatives aim to ease passenger movement, improve facilities and distribute train operations more efficiently. Officials expect the upgraded infrastructure to significantly reduce pressure on Jaipur Junction and enhance convenience for commuters.

(Tol, 12.06.26)

Jaipur's Swachh Challenge

Despite extensive preparations for Swachh Survekshan 2026, Jaipur continues to face mounting garbage, irregular waste collection, and poor waste segregation. Civic authorities have launched audits, awareness drives, and stricter monitoring, with citizen feedback playing a key role in rankings.

However, rapid urban expansion and inadequate sanitation infrastructure continue to hinder the city's cleanliness efforts. (Tol, 16.05.26)

McDonald's Licence Suspended

Authorities suspended the food licence of a McDonald's outlet at Jaipur's Gaurav Tower after inspections found cooking oil exceeding safety limits. High Total Polar Compound levels made the oil unsafe for consumption.

Despite improvement notices, deficiencies persisted, prompting officials to halt food sales at the outlet until compliance with food safety standards is achieved.

(DB, 16.04.26)

Jaipur Airport Goes Water-Positive

Jaipur International Airport has become Rajasthan's first water-positive airport, replenishing more water than it consumes through rainwater harvesting and recycling initiatives.

The airport received Water Positive Accreditation from Bureau Veritas, reflecting its commitment to sustainable resource management and environmental conservation.

(Tol, 28.04.26)

'Rang De Gulabi' Colours Jaipur

Jaipur Municipal Corporation's 'Rang De Gulabi' campaign transformed over 500 walls across the city with murals promoting cleanliness, environment, women's empowerment and unity.

More than 600 artworks were created across 13 zones with participation from citizens, children and transgender community members. The initiative aimed to encourage public participation and spread awareness about cleanliness.

(Tol, 03.05.26)



Nari Shakti Act Reshapes Leadership

The Nari Shakti Vandan Act seeks to strengthen women's political representation by providing greater leadership opportunities in governance. The legislation promotes inclusion, equitable participation, and decision-making roles for women.

Supported by delimitation based on the 2011 Census, it extends reservation to legislatures and assemblies. Rajasthan's experience with women's reservation in Panchayati Raj institutions demonstrates the positive impact of women-led governance and empowerment.



(APAC Media, 05.04.26)

Rajasthan Villages Preserve Sanskrit

Around 26,000 people in villages across Ajmer, Bundi, and Banswara districts speak Sanskrit in daily life. The revival was driven by Sanskrit Bharati's language campaigns launched in the 1990s.

Through intensive language camps, the organisation encouraged residents to adopt Sanskrit for everyday communication. Today, families use the language in homes, schools, markets, and community interactions, preserving India's ancient linguistic heritage.

(DB, 12.04.26)

Rajasthan's Environmental Alarm

Rajasthan registered 10,824 environmental offences in 2024, the second-highest in India after Tamil Nadu, according to NCRB data. The state also led the country in noise pollution violations with 8,264 cases.

Officials attributed the rise to stronger enforcement and greater reporting. Most noise cases involved loudspeakers, DJs and public events, especially in major cities such as Jaipur, Jodhpur, Udaipur and Kota.

(Tol, 08.05.26)

JDA Plans 10-Storey Tower

The Jaipur Development Authority plans its first 10-storey residential tower for government employees in Lalkothi. The ₹200-crore project will provide over 250 flats, including 3-BHK and 4-BHK units, along with amenities such as a gym, sports facilities and a community hall.

Intended primarily for JDA employees, the project signals a shift toward high-rise housing and may influence future government residential schemes.

(Tol, 12.05.26)

Jaipur 2nd in Road Fatalities

Jaipur recorded 1,001 road accident deaths in 2024, making it the country's second deadliest city after Delhi, according to NCRB data. Experts blamed poor coordination, weak enforcement and unsafe road design.



Officials said accident-prone stretches remain neglected and action often follows major tragedies. They called for stronger enforcement, safer infrastructure and reforms in traffic management to improve road safety.

(Tol, 11.05.26)

Barricades Block Zebra Crossings

Barricades and railings at several Jaipur intersections are blocking access to zebra crossings, forcing pedestrians to cross through moving traffic. The problem exists at major junctions, including JLN Marg and Tonk Road.

Experts say pedestrian safety has been compromised by prioritising free-left traffic movement. They recommend

redesigning intersections with dedicated slip lanes and safer crossing systems to protect pedestrians.

(Tol, 11.05.26)

Jaipur Opens Dermatology Institute

The Institute of Dermatology at SMS Hospital, Jaipur, inaugurated in April 2026, offers advanced medical and cosmetic skin care at affordable rates. Considered among the world's most advanced dermatology facilities, it bridges the gap between expensive private clinics and public healthcare.

The institute provides international-standard treatments, making specialised dermatological services accessible to a wider population.

(ET, 17.03.26)

Janani Service Restarts (V-19)

The Rajasthan health department has ordered all 600 Janani Express ambulances to resume operations after a six-month suspension caused by expired contracts.

The 104-emergency transport service, which provides free transportation for pregnant women and newborns, is being transferred to Rajasthan Medical Relief Societies for faster deployment. The move is expected to restore timely maternal and neonatal emergency care.

(Tol, 30.06.26)

Sariska's Wild Comeback (V-20)

A new documentary will chronicle the Sariska Tiger Reserve's remarkable recovery from a tigerless forest in 2005 to a thriving habitat with 56 tigers. Spearheaded



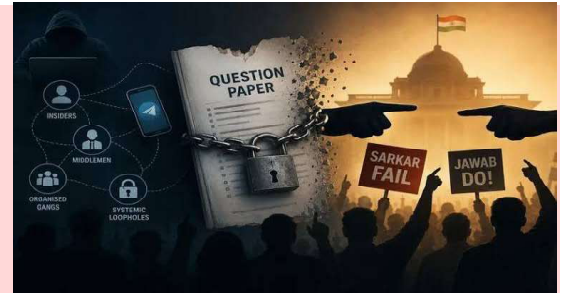
by acclaimed wildlife filmmaker Subbiah Nallamuthu, the two-year film project will document the reserve's historic scientific reintroduction program across all seasons.

(Tol, 29.06.26)

India's Examination Crisis: Beyond Paper Leaks

Pradeep S. Mehta* and Madhvendra Singh Panwar**

India's examination crisis is fundamentally a crisis of trust. As sociologist Niklas Luhmann argued, citizens rely on institutions because they cannot personally verify the integrity of complex systems. Once trust erodes, even legitimate outcomes become suspect.



The cancellation of examinations, allegations of paper leaks, court cases, and student protests have become almost annual features of India's education system. Each controversy triggers familiar responses: tighter security, more CCTV cameras, stronger encryption, enhanced surveillance, and tougher laws. While necessary, these measures alone cannot solve the problem.

The real question is not why a paper leaked, but why leaks persist despite repeated reforms. During the NEET-UG 2024 proceedings, the Supreme Court observed that although evidence suggested leaks in certain locations, there was no proof that the entire examination had been compromised. Yet, for millions of students, even the possibility of a breach was enough to undermine confidence in the system.

In India, a single examination often determines access to higher education, government employment, and economic mobility. Families invest years of effort and resources, making the demand for unfair advantage almost inevitable. Yet reforms largely concentrate on protecting question papers rather than reducing the incentives that make leaked papers valuable.

The visible failures are symptoms of deeper institutional weaknesses. Accountability scholar Mark Bovens argues that responsibility weakens when

dispersed across too many actors. India's examination ecosystem spans testing agencies, ministries, state governments, district administrations, private vendors, technology providers, examination centres, and law enforcement. When failures occur, responsibility becomes fragmented, creating what governance scholars describe as the "problem of many hands."

The political economy of examination fraud further complicates reform. Economist Mancur Olson observed that corruption persists when benefits are concentrated while costs are dispersed. A paper leak benefits a small network of intermediaries and candidates, while its costs are borne by millions of students, their families, employers, and public institutions. Because beneficiaries are organised and victims are diffuse, sustained pressure for structural reform remains weak.

The crisis also has a societal dimension. Sociologist Pierre Bourdieu viewed educational credentials as instruments of social mobility. In India, examinations are not merely tests of knowledge but gateways to employment, social status, economic security, and family aspirations. Their immense symbolic and economic value intensifies competition and can encourage unethical shortcuts.

At its core lies the challenge of scarcity. Too many candidates compete for too few quality educational and employment

opportunities. When a single examination becomes the gateway to limited opportunities, the stakes become extraordinarily high. Paper leaks are therefore not isolated failures but predictable outcomes of a system under immense pressure.

India should strengthen technological safeguards through dynamic question generation, encrypted question banks, and algorithmically assembled papers. An independent National Examination Integrity Authority, supported by regular audits and transparent reporting, could improve oversight. More importantly, India must gradually reduce dependence on single high-stakes examinations through multi-stage assessments, competency-based evaluations, diversified recruitment pathways, and expanded quality education and vocational opportunities.

The temptation after every paper leak is to demand more security. But locks, cameras, encryption, and stricter laws alone cannot restore confidence. India's examination crisis is ultimately a question of trust, governance, incentives, accountability, and opportunity. Unless these structural issues are addressed, paper leaks will remain not exceptional failures but predictable outcomes of the system itself.

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Abridged from an article that appeared in *The Financial Express*, on June 15, 2026

A Case for Judicial Reforms

Vijay L Kelkar* and Pradeep S. Mehta**

Few phrases capture the frustration of India's judicial system as sharply as "tarikh pe tarikh". Cases drag on for years, files accumulate faster than they can be resolved, and repeated adjournments have become routine. While the causes of judicial delay are well known, the more important question is why the problem persists and what reforms are needed to ensure timely justice.



India's judiciary remains under severe strain, with only about 22 judges per million people, far below what is needed for efficient justice delivery. Based on the sanctioned strength of judges and the 2011 Census population, this shortage is aggravated by large vacancies in high courts and the subordinate judiciary. Filling these vacancies promptly, alongside increasing sanctioned strength, is essential.

However, capacity expansion alone will not solve the problem. Structural reforms are equally important. Since the government is the country's largest litigant, effective implementation of litigation policies at the Union and state levels could significantly reduce avoidable cases. Another major reform would be to restructure the Supreme Court into a constitutional court dealing only with matters of constitutional significance, while regional appellate courts hear appeals from high courts. This would reduce the Supreme Court's burden and make appellate justice more accessible.

Procedural reforms are equally necessary. Greater use of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) can divert routine disputes away from courts, while ending the long court vacation system would increase judicial working days without expanding the bench. A mandatory court management system with fixed timelines for lawyers would also curb unnecessary adjournments that contribute to persistent delays.

Judicial accountability also requires urgent attention. Recent resignations of judges facing corruption inquiries underscore the need for an independent Judicial Services Commission, similar to those in South Africa and Kenya.

Technology must now become central to judicial functioning rather than remain a pilot initiative. Programmes such as the e-Courts Mission Mode Project have demonstrated the potential of digital

systems to improve transparency and reduce delays, but implementation remains uneven. Wider adoption of e-filing, digital notifications, and automated case management can save valuable judicial time and improve efficiency, particularly in routine matters such as accident claims. At the same time, strong cybersecurity safeguards and efforts to bridge the digital divide are essential to ensure equal access.

Timely justice also depends on equitable access to legal representation. For poorer and marginalised citizens, delays are compounded by inadequate legal assistance. Although the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 provides mechanisms for legal aid, their reach and quality remain inconsistent. Greater funding, better-trained legal aid lawyers, and stronger outreach are essential to ensure that justice is accessible to all, not just those who can afford it.

Judicial delays are not unique to India, but other countries have responded with greater urgency. As noted in the paper *Indian Judicial System and Reforms: The Story of Delays and Pendency*, the United States protects the right to a speedy trial through judicial balancing tests, while Europe and the United Kingdom treat excessive delays as violations of fundamental rights. Canada imposes strict timelines for criminal trials, and countries such as Singapore and Estonia use technology extensively to streamline case management and minimise adjournments.

Ultimately, the challenge is not whether India can reform its judicial system but whether it has the resolve to act. A justice system that delays justice risks denying it altogether. To uphold the Constitution's promise, India must pursue comprehensive reforms that make justice not only fair, but also timely, accessible, transparent, and credible.

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**Secretary-General of CUTS International. Abridged from an article that appeared in *The Financial Express*, on June 25, 2026

Sources: AP: Associated Press; BC: British Broadcasting Corporation; C: Chronicle Club; DB: Dainik Bhaskar; DP: Daily Pioneer; ET: Economic Times; FP: First Post; HT: Hindustan Times; IE: Indian Express; IT: India Today; NoA: News on Air; SD: Sikkim Darpan; TG: The Guardian; TH: The Hindu; Tol: Times of India

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