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NATIONAL JUDICIAL DATA GRID (NJDG)

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG)". This topic has relevance in the "Polity and Governance" section of the UPSC CSE exam.

For Prelims:
What is National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG)?
For Mains:
GS2: Polity and Governance

Why in the news?

Recently, Chief Justice D.Y. Chandrachud publicly announced in the Supreme Court about integrating the Supreme Court with the National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG).

National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG)

- NJDG is an online database containing information about orders, judgments, and case details from 18,735 District and subordinate Courts, High Courts and now Supreme Court.
- It's an integral part of the eCourts Project and can be accessed at https://njdg.ecourts.gov.in/
- NJDG provides real-time updates and detailed data, including information from the Taluka (sub-district) level to the Supreme Court of India.
- NJDG is developed as part of Phase II of the e-Courts project, a Centrally Sponsored Scheme.
- The platform is a collaborative effort between the National Informatics Centre (NIC) and the in-house software development team of the Computer Cell, Registry of the Supreme Court.
- It integrates data from over 18,735 computerised courts across India.

Benefits of National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG)

- NJDG serves as a monitoring tool to track and reduce case backlogs. For example, in the Supreme Court in 2023, there are 64,854 pending cases, largely due to legacy cases.
- It identifies bottlenecks in the judicial process. For instance, a sudden increase in land disputes can prompt policymakers to strengthen relevant laws.
- NJDG generates insights into specific areas of law. It's linked with Land Records data from 26 States for land disputes, providing valuable information for decision-makers.

Ease of Doing Business Recognition:

- The World Bank acknowledged the effectiveness of the National Judicial Data Grid in its Ease of Doing Business report for 2018.
- It was praised for its role in generating case management reports, simplifying the enforcement of contracts.

Data Accessibility:
- In line with the National Data Sharing and Accessibility Policy (NDSAP) announced by the Government of India, the NJDG provides an Open Application Programming Interface (API).
- Central and State Government agencies can access NJDG data using a departmental ID and access key, facilitating institutional litigants in evaluating and monitoring cases.
- There are plans to extend this accessibility to non-institutional litigants in the future.

Recent Addition:
- NJDG has recently incorporated a feature to specify the reasons for case delays.
- This addition is valuable as it allows tracking the judiciary's challenges during case adjudication.
- It enables decision-makers to take targeted steps to address the growing backlog of cases.

The e-Courts Integrated Mission Mode Project:
- The e-Courts Integrated Mission Mode Project is a Government of India initiative to enhance access to justice through technology.
- It falls under the national e-Governance project of the Department of Justice, Ministry of Law and Justice.
- The project's inception is rooted in the 'The National Policy and Action Plan for Implementation of ICT in the Indian Judiciary – 2005,' established by the e-Committee of the Supreme Court of India.
- Its primary objective is computerising district and subordinate courts to offer improved services to litigants, lawyers, and the judiciary.
- The project has been executed through a three-phase approach:

Phase	Objectives
Phase I (2011-2015)	Computerise 14,249 district and subordinate courts Launch of the national e-courts portal (ecourts.gov.in).
Phase II (2015-2023)	Computerise 18,735 district and subordinate courts, create NJDG
Phase III (Commencing in 2023)	Establish a unified technological platform for the judiciary, digitise all court records, universalise e-filing and e-payments, create virtual courts and eSewa Kendras

Q1. With reference to the National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG), consider the following statements:
1. NJDG provides real-time updates and detailed data, including information from the Taluka (sub-district) level to the Supreme Court of India.
2. NJDG is developed as part of Phase I of the e-Courts project, a Centrally Sponsored Scheme.
3. NJDG does not integrate data from computerised courts but relies on manual data entry.

Which of the statements given above is/are NOT correct?

(a) 1 and 2 only

(b) 2 and 3 only

(c) 3 only

(d) None

Answer: (b)

Q2. Consider the following:

1. National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG) is a monitoring tool to track and reduce case backlogs, particularly in legacy cases.
2. NJDG generates insights into specific areas of law, notably in cases related to land disputes.
3. NJDG provides an Open Application Programming Interface (API) facilitating data access for government agencies and institutional and non-institutional litigants.

How many of the abovementioned statements are correct?

(a) Only one

(b) Only two

(c) All three

(d) None

Answer: (b)

Q3. How do initiatives like the National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG) and the e-Courts Project contribute to making justice more accessible and efficient in India?

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