PrepAlpine

The Next-Generation UPSC Institution

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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS DATED 25.03.2026

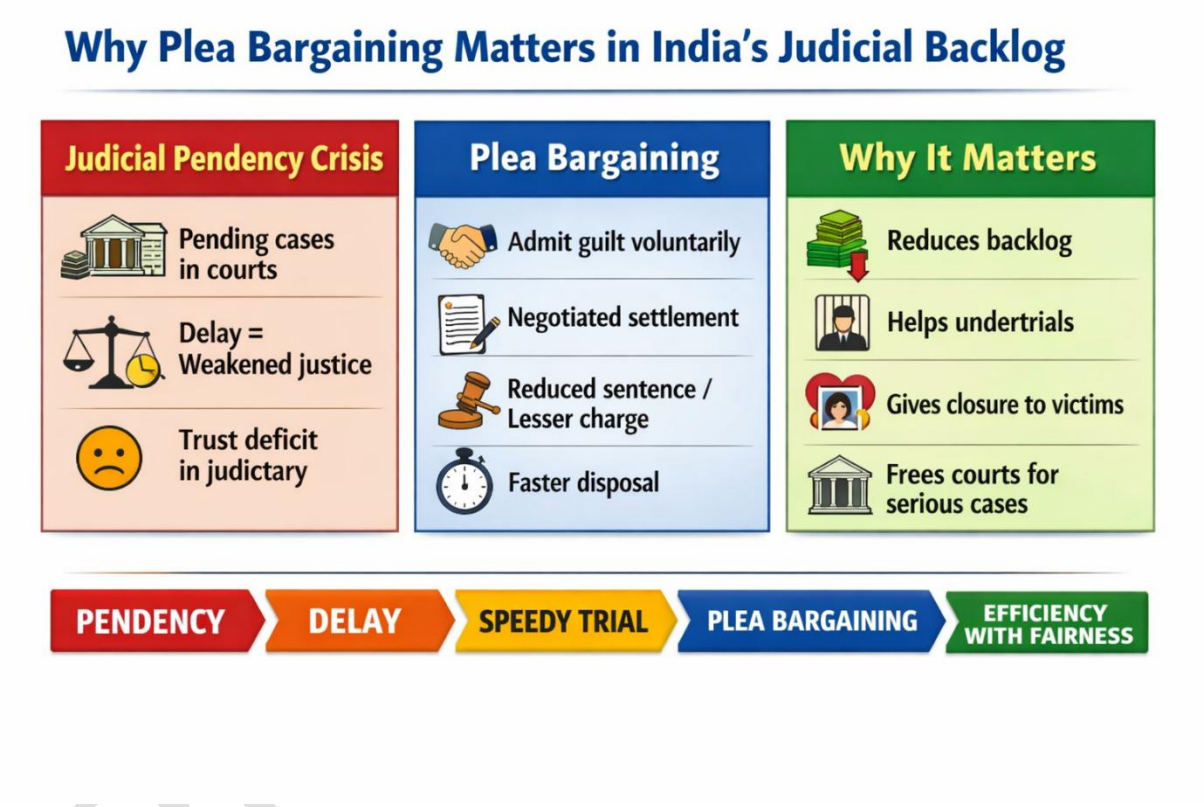
GS Paper II: Polity

1. Plea Bargaining and Judicial Pendency in India

a. Introduction

India's judicial system is currently facing a severe crisis of delay, with more than five crore cases pending across courts. This raises a fundamental concern: justice that is excessively delayed begins to lose its meaning. It weakens public trust and reduces the effectiveness of legal remedies.

In this context, plea bargaining emerges as an important reform tool. It attempts to balance efficiency with fairness by introducing a system of negotiated justice, offering quicker resolution without full trials.



b. Understanding Plea Bargaining

Concept and Meaning

- Plea bargaining is a legal process where the accused and prosecution reach a mutually agreed settlement.
- The accused accepts guilt (fully or partially) in return for reduced punishment or lesser charges.
- It shifts the system from a purely adversarial model to a more cooperative one.

Practical Illustration

- Instead of a long trial lasting years, an accused may admit guilt early.
- In return, they receive a lighter sentence and the case is resolved quickly.

c. Legal Position in India

Statutory Basis

- Introduced through the Code of Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Act, 2005.
- Applicable mainly to less serious offences.

Constitutional Linkages

- Connected to Article 21 – right to life and personal liberty which includes right to speedy trial.
- Linked to Directive Principles promoting equal access to justice.

Implementation Reality

- Used in less than 1% of cases.
- Reflects a gap between legal provision and actual practice.

d. Relevance in Addressing Judicial Pendency

Reduction of Backlog

- Many pending cases involve minor offences.
- Settling them quickly reduces burden on courts.

Ensuring Speedy Justice

- Long trials reduce faith in the system.
- Plea bargaining ensures faster and predictable outcomes.

Relief for Undertrial Prisoners

- Many remain jailed without conviction for long periods.
- Early settlement prevents unnecessary detention.

Closure for Victims

- Long litigation causes emotional and financial strain.
- Quick resolution provides certainty and closure.

Improving Institutional Efficiency

- Courts can focus on serious and constitutional matters.
- Enhances overall judicial productivity.

Economic Implications

- Delays affect contract enforcement and business confidence.
- Faster justice improves investment climate.

e. Comparative Perspective

United States

- Majority of criminal cases are resolved through plea bargaining.
- Leads to rapid disposal of cases.

European Countries

- Use moderated forms of negotiated justice.
- Improved case management and efficiency.

India's Position

- Very limited use compared to global standards.
- Contributes to persistent backlog.

f. Challenges in the Indian Context

Lack of Awareness

- Many see it as surrender rather than strategy.
- Reduces willingness to opt for it.

Institutional Resistance

- Preference for traditional full trials.
- Legal culture resists negotiated settlements.

Concerns of Misuse

- Risk of coercion, especially for vulnerable individuals.
- Raises questions about voluntariness.

Absence of Incentives

- No strong motivation for lawyers or prosecutors to settle early.
- System does not reward efficiency.

Inadequate Infrastructure

- Lack of formal negotiation frameworks.
- Weak monitoring and transparency mechanisms.

g. Way Forward: Towards a Structured Approach

Clear Guidelines

- Define eligible cases and procedures clearly.
- Reduce ambiguity in application.

Capacity Building

- Train prosecutors and lawyers in ethical negotiation.
- Ensure fairness in settlements.

Active Judicial Role

- Judges should identify suitable cases early.
- Ensure absence of coercion.

Public Awareness

- Educate citizens about its benefits.
- Change perception from “defeat” to “efficiency”.

Safeguards Against Misuse

- Strong checks for transparency and voluntariness.
- Protect rights of the accused.

Gradual Expansion

- Start with minor offences.
- Expand based on experience.

Conclusion

The crisis of judicial pendency in India reflects deeper structural limitations of a purely trial-based system. Plea bargaining offers a practical solution by enhancing speed, certainty, and efficiency.

However, its success depends on maintaining a balance between expediency and fairness. With proper safeguards, institutional support, and public awareness, plea bargaining can become a key instrument for delivering timely, accessible, and effective justice in India.

GS Paper II: Current Affairs

2. Biologics and Non-Animal Methodologies in Drug Development

a. Introduction

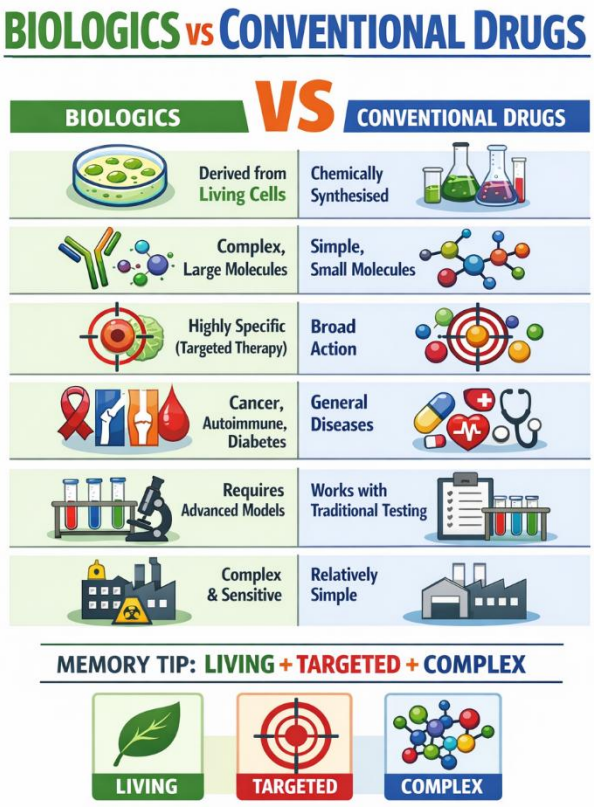
The field of modern medicine is undergoing a major transformation with the rising importance of biologics. These advanced medicines are increasingly used to treat complex diseases such as cancer, diabetes, and autoimmune disorders.

However, this shift has also exposed the limitations of traditional drug testing systems that depend heavily on animal models. As a result, there is a global movement towards more accurate and ethical alternatives known as Non-Animal Methodologies (NAMs). In India, initiatives like BioPharma SHAKTI aim to align the pharmaceutical sector with these emerging trends, strengthening both innovation and public health.

b. Understanding Biologics

Meaning and Nature

- Biologics are medicines derived from living cells or organisms.
- Unlike conventional drugs (chemically synthesised), they are produced through complex biological processes.



Types of Biologics

- Vaccines
- Insulin
- Monoclonal antibodies — used in cancer treatment
- Gene and cell-based therapies

Key Characteristics

- Highly targeted action on specific parts of the body
- Greater effectiveness in treating complex diseases
- Complex structure, making development and testing difficult

c. Limitations of Animal-Based Testing

Biological Differences

- Animals and humans have different immune systems and cellular responses
- Results in animals may not accurately predict human outcomes

Low Predictability

- Many drugs that succeed in animal trials fail in human trials
- Leads to wastage of time, money, and effort

Ethical Concerns

- Growing global opposition to animal experimentation
- Demand for humane and alternative testing methods

Structural Limitation

- Animal models cannot fully replicate complex human diseases
- Especially inadequate for testing advanced biologics

d. Non-Animal Methodologies: A New Approach

i. Concept

- Scientific techniques that use human-based systems instead of animals
- Aim to replicate human biology more accurately

ii. Key Technologies

Organoids

- Miniature versions of human organs grown from cells
- Mimic real organ functions

Organ-on-Chip

- Microdevices that simulate organ functions e.g., blood flow, tissue interaction
- Provide realistic testing environments

3D Bioprinting

- Creation of human tissues using living cells
- Useful for personalised medicine

e. Advantages of Non-Animal Methodologies

Higher Accuracy

- Use of human cells improves prediction of drug behaviour
- Reduces failure rates in clinical trials

Faster Drug Development

- Shorter testing cycles
- Quicker transition from lab to market

Cost Efficiency

- Initial investment is high
- Long-term savings due to reduced failures

Ethical Benefits

- Reduces or eliminates animal testing
- Aligns science with humane values

Supports Precision Medicine

- Enables patient-specific drug testing
- Improves personalised healthcare

f. Biosimilars and Their Importance

Meaning

- Biosimilars are equivalent versions of biologic drugs developed after patent expiry
- Not identical like generics, but highly similar in safety and effectiveness

Significance

- Reduce cost of treatment
- Improve access to advanced therapies
- Promote competition in the pharmaceutical sector

g. BioPharma SHAKTI Initiative

Objective

- Build a strong ecosystem for biologics and biosimilars
- Promote adoption of advanced testing methods like NAMs

Key Features

- Financial support for research and development
- Infrastructure creation for biotechnology
- Support for startups and MSMEs

Strategic Role

- Bridges gap between research and industry
- Ensures innovations reach real-world healthcare

h. Transformative Potential for India

Improved Drug Safety

- Human-based testing increases reliability
- Reduces late-stage failures

Faster Access to Medicines

- Accelerates drug development timelines
- Benefits patients with quicker availability

Global Leadership

- Strengthens India's position in biologics and biosimilars
- Enhances export potential and technological leadership

Affordable Healthcare

- Lower development costs reduce drug prices

- Expands access to advanced treatments

Ethical Leadership

- Reduces dependence on animal testing
- Positions India as a responsible scientific leader

i. Challenges and Constraints

High Costs and Infrastructure Gaps

- Advanced technologies require significant investment
- Limited access for smaller institutions

Regulatory Uncertainty

- Lack of clear guidelines for NAMs
- Delays adoption in industry

Research–Industry Gap

- Innovations remain confined to laboratories
- Weak commercialisation pathways

Patent Issues

- Extended patents delay entry of biosimilars
- Affects affordability

Limited Awareness and Funding

- Investors lack understanding of biotechnology potential
- Reduces funding support

j. Way Forward

Clear Regulatory Framework

- Standardise NAMs in drug approval processes
- Ensure global acceptance

Infrastructure Development

- Build advanced labs and testing facilities
- Promote equitable access

Industry–Academia Collaboration

- Translate research into marketable products
- Strengthen innovation ecosystem

Support for Startups

- Provide funding, incentives, and incubation
- Encourage biotech entrepreneurship

Balanced Patent Regime

- Protect innovation while ensuring access
- Promote timely entry of biosimilars

Skill Development

- Train workforce in emerging biotech tools
- Build human capital

Conclusion

The future of drug development lies in the growing role of biologics and the adoption of advanced testing systems. Traditional animal-based methods are increasingly inadequate for modern medical needs.

By embracing Non-Animal Methodologies and strengthening initiatives like BioPharma SHAKTI, India can build a forward-looking pharmaceutical ecosystem. This transformation will ensure safer, faster, and more affordable healthcare, while establishing India as a global leader in next-generation biotechnology.

Reader's Note — About This Current Affairs Compilation

Dear Aspirant,

This document is part of the PrepAlpine Current Affairs Series — designed to bring clarity, structure, and precision to your daily UPSC learning.

While every effort has been made to balance depth with brevity, please keep the following in mind:

1. Orientation & Purpose

This compilation is curated primarily from the UPSC Mains perspective — with emphasis on conceptual clarity, analytical depth, and interlinkages across GS papers.

However, the PrepAlpine team is simultaneously developing a dedicated Prelims-focused Current Affairs Series, designed for:

- factual coverage
- data recall
- Prelims-style MCQs
- objective pattern analysis

This Prelims Edition will be released separately as a standalone publication.

2. Content Length

Some sections may feel shorter or longer depending on topic relevance and news density.
To fit your personal preference, you may freely resize or summarize sections using any LLM tool (ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, etc.) at your convenience.

3. Format Flexibility

The formatting combines:

- paragraphs
- lists
- tables
- visual cues

—all optimised for retention.

If you prefer a specific style (lists → paras, paras → tables, etc.), feel free to convert using any free LLM.

4. Monthly Current Affairs Release

The complete Monthly Current Affairs Module will be released soon, optimized to a compact 100–150 pages — comprehensive yet concise, exam-ready, and revision-efficient.