Concerns with SC judgements on Master of Roster

What is the issue?

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- In recent times, the master of roster controversy has emerged in the Supreme Court.
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- This issue is focussed on Chief Justice of India's absolute power on the judicial administration.
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What are the significance of master of roster?

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- **Master of Roster is a judge appointed by the SC to list out the allocation of cases to different judges, for preventing two different benches from hearing the same kind of case.**
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- **The Roster will allow for effective case management, by allocating similar cases to judges with more experience.**
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- **Last year, the SC through few judgements,** formalised the "convention" that the CJI is *Sui generis* (unique) and hence the master of roster.
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What events led to the judgements regarding issue of roster?

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- Earlier in 2017, four senior most judges of the SC had blamed the present CJI for selectively allotting cases to preferred benches.
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- In response to that, the CJI published a new subject wise roster for allocation of cases.

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- This allocation, did little to pacify the judges as the CJI allocated most important public litigations matters to himself.
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- Following this, a verdict responded to the criticism by declaring that the CJI is only a first among the equals as a judge.
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- But the bench also agreed that no one, even the fellow judges of SC can question the powers of CJI as the court's top administrator.
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- Final judgement confirmed that the CJI's dominance over the roster was necessary to protect the SC from anarchy.
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What are the concerns of the SC judgements?

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- There is a deterioration in the unwritten and righteous custom that the law of the land is supreme.
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- Concentration of immense powers on a single person is harmful for the nation and is also against the principles of democracy.
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- The issues triggering these judgements are also concerning as the cases were relating to allegations of a conspiracy to bribe SC judges.
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- Previous norms of pronouncing sensitive judgements by consulting with collegium also will get affected as the CJI will solely decide on cases as well as judgements.
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Source: The Hindu

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