

Raising District Judges' Retirement Age to 62 Years

Prelims: *Current events of national and international importance | Polity*

Why in News?

The Supreme Court announced that 14 States have agreed to increase the retirement age of District Judicial Officers from 60 to 62 years.

- Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant expressed optimism that the remaining States would also consent.
- The Court declined to expedite individual pleas from judicial officers nearing retirement, noting that the matter involves both the Supreme Court and the States.

Constitutional and Institutional Context





Judicial office	Retirement age
 District Judicial Officers	60 years currently, with enhancement to 62 being pursued
 High Court Judges	62 years
 Supreme Court Judges	65 years

Key Directives Issued by the Supreme Court

- **Retirement age** - The retirement age shall be increased from 60 to 62 years in States that have provided consent for this enhancement.
- **Amendment of service rules** - The relevant States are directed to amend their judicial service rules, preferably within a period of two months.
- **High Court assessment** - Any extension is contingent upon an evaluation of the

concerned officer's suitability and performance by the High Court.

- **Interim protection** - Until the rules are amended, eligible officers in the specified States who have reached 60 years of age shall not retire until 62, subject to assessment by the High Court.
- **Rejoining option** - Judicial officers in the seven specified States who retired on or after March 31 of the relevant year shall be given the option to rejoin, provided they have not secured subsequent employment.
- **Financial burden** - The Court held that States may not cite financial burden as the sole reason for opposing the enhancement.

Previous Judicial Background

- In 2002, the Supreme Court declined to accept the recommendation of the Justice K. Jagannatha Shetty Commission, which had proposed increasing the retirement age of District Judges to 62 years.
- Subsequently, several States, including Telangana and Madhya Pradesh, initiated measures to increase the retirement age.
- The current proceedings aim to establish a uniform enhancement of the retirement age for District Judiciary Judges nationwide.

Significance

- **Experience retention** - Enables the judiciary to retain experienced District Judges for extended periods.
- **Institutional continuity** - Facilitates the preservation of judicial experience and administrative knowledge.
- **Judicial efficiency** - Supports the effective functioning of district courts, contingent upon suitability and performance assessments.
- **Uniformity** - Establishing a common retirement age reduces disparities in service conditions among States.
- **Centre-State and judicial coordination** - Implementation necessitates that States amend service rules, while High Courts assess the suitability of officers.

Reference

[The Hindu | Raising District Judges' Retirement Age to 62 Years](#)