Polity & Governance · GS - II

Examine the relationship between the right to a speedy trial and the administration of criminal justice in India. How can courts balance the rights of accused persons with the interests of victims and the need for an effective trial?

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 03/11/2026	GS - II	Polity & Governance

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Article 21; speedy trial; personal liberty; presumption of innocence; bail jurisprudence; victims' rights; witness protection; judicial delays; continuous hearings; access to justice

Model Answer

Introduction

A speedy trial is an important component of fair criminal justice and has been recognised by the Supreme Court as part of Article 21. Delays can affect both the liberty of accused persons and the interests of victims seeking justice.

Importance of a Speedy Trial

Prolonged pre-trial detention can undermine personal liberty, while delayed proceedings may cause witnesses to become unavailable and evidence to deteriorate. In cases involving serious offences, timely judicial proceedings are particularly important for ensuring accountability and maintaining public confidence.

Balancing Competing Interests

Courts must assess bail applications individually, considering the duration of custody, the stage of the trial, the seriousness of allegations and the likelihood of interference with evidence or witnesses. The rights of the accused

must be protected without compromising victim safety or the integrity of proceedings.

Way Forward

Effective case management, continuous hearings where appropriate, adequate judicial capacity, witness protection and timely examination of evidence can reduce delays. Victims should receive appropriate legal support and protection throughout the proceedings.

Conclusion

A fair criminal justice system must protect personal liberty, safeguard victims and ensure that serious cases are tried efficiently. Timely and impartial adjudication is essential to the rule of law.

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