Unlock plea bargaining — resolve 90% of cases without trial

Faster justice, safer India. End disputes faster, **unlock trillions** in assets frozen in disputes. Enforceable contracts, more investments and lower cost of governance with stronger rule-of-law.

सत्यमेव जयते

Make justice 10 to 20 times faster

by making truth the default strategy



TEAM सत्युग

16-10-2026

Parliament passed the law twice — but left out the tools to make it work

2005–06

Plea-bargaining chapter added to the CrPC by the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2005; in force 5 July 2006.

2023

Plea-bargaining chapter re-enacted in the BNSS, adding a 30-day window and first-offender concessions. The core impediments remain.

TWENTY YEARS ON · WHY THE LAW STILL DOESN'T WORK

SETTLED
What Parliament passed

- An accused may plead and receive **a lesser sentence**
- The plea is **judicially supervised** and voluntary
- The plea is **not a confession** at any later trial

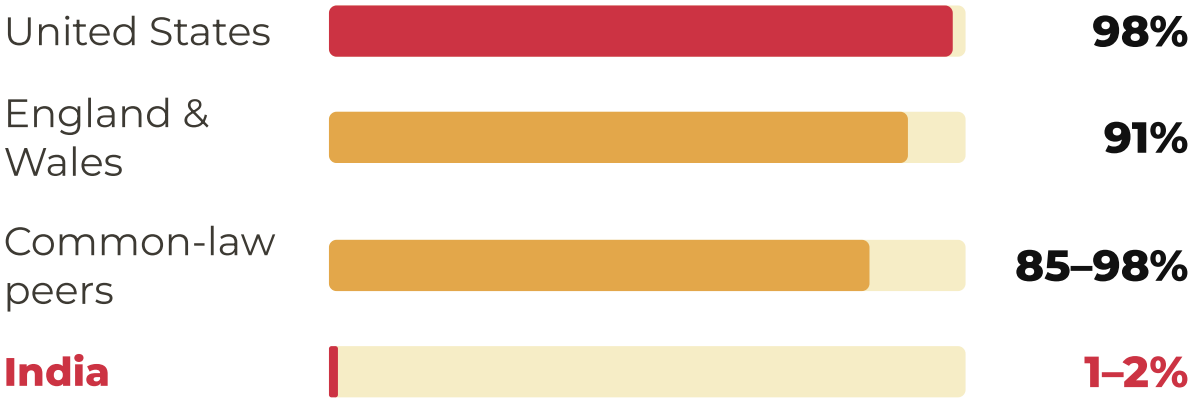
MISSING
What was left out

- A **sentencing baseline** to measure the concession
- Relief from the **victim's veto**, and notice to the accused
- An **enforceable law against falsehood**

Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2005; Chapter XXIII, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023.

Common-law peers: most convictions come by plea in India, 99.9% wait for trial

Share of convictions that come by plea



Same measure for all four: the share of convictions. In Satyug's model, a guilty accused pleads when trial is quick and conviction likely; in India delay pays, so almost no one does.

99.9%

of cases before India's criminal courts are not settled by plea — each stays in the trial queue, clogging the same courts

0.11%

of cases before the courts settled by plea bargain in 2022 — **19,135 out of 1.7 crore**. Fewer than 5 in 100 end in conviction each year.

CLOGGED COURTS, CROWDED JAILS

Only about **1.3 lakh convicts** are in India's prisons, against **62 lakh crimes** registered in 2023 alone. Three in four prisoners are still waiting for their trial.

US: US Courts, Judicial Business FY2025. England & Wales: CPS Annual Report 2024–25. Common-law peers, 2019: E&W Crown Court, Australia, Ireland, New Zealand, US federal (Paolini et al., JELS 2025; median of all 52 jurisdictions 43%). India (Chapter XXIII plea bargaining only): NCRB Crime in India 2019–24; prison statistics; DoJ study, Jan 2023.

The cost of failure — 5.9 crore cases stuck in court

TODAY · 0.11% PLEAD

99.9%

of criminal cases are not resolved by plea; nearly every one waits for trial

→

IF 90% PLEAD

10×

fewer trials: one case in ten reaches a courtroom

→

IF 95% PLEAD

20×

fewer trials: one case in twenty reaches a courtroom

From 90% to 95% pleas: justice 10 to 20 times faster.

5.9 crore

cases pending in district courts and High Courts

4.1 crore

of them criminal, in the district courts

47 lakh

district-court cases older than ten years

Arithmetic, not a forecast: trials fall as pleas rise. NJDG, October 2026.

Trials take forever, convictions rarely come — so no one cares to follow the law

India has laws on pollution, food, medicines and bribery. **What it lacks is fear of the law** — when breaking a rule costs nothing, ignoring it is the smart choice.

WHY NOBODY FEARS THE LAW

90%
of criminal cases for trial still pending at year-end

12+ yrs
for a case to pass through three courts

14th
India's rule-of-law rank among the 18 G20 countries ranked

01 Pollution

88,400+

environment cases pending trial (2022); the Environment Protection Act backlog alone needs about **34 years** to clear.

02 Food adulteration

1 in 5

food samples tested failed standards over five years — **1.86 lakh** of 8.86 lakh.

03 Spurious drugs

593 → 35

spurious-drug cases (2015–19) → convictions. Most are still pending, years later.

04 Corruption and public money

7,229

CBI corruption cases pending trial — **409 of them for over 20 years**. A bribe today risks a verdict decades away.

PERJURY LAWS ARE USED AS A SHORTCUT OFFENCE

Years
to prove the pollution, adulteration or fraud

vs

Days
to prove a sworn lie, or a conspiracy once one insider cooperates

➡

Comply
when lying costs, obeying is the cheaper choice

NCRB 2024; DAKSH 2023; WJP 2025 (G20); NCRB 2022 via Down To Earth; MoS Health, RS, Jul 2026; LS Committee on Chemicals (2024); CVC Annual Report 2025.

Why almost no one pleads guilty — four flaws in the law, one fatal

01

The victim can block any plea deal

The victim's agreement is a **precondition**. Dispositions die at that point, or are bought.

s. 291 BNSS

02

No sentencing guidelines

No **sentencing guidelines** were ever framed. Nobody can say what a plea is worth.

s. 293 BNSS

03

The accused is never told of the option

No notice at arrest, remand or charge — and only for offences up to seven years.

ss. 289–290 BNSS

04

Lying in court goes unpunished

Only the court may complain of perjury, and rarely does. **No concession can beat a free acquittal.**

s. 215 BNSS

The first three are procedural. The fourth decides whether they matter at all.

Sections 215, 289, 290, 291, 292 and 293, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023.

Right now, in every Indian court, lying is free

Pendency due to dishonesty

4.1 crore

criminal cases stuck in district courts — each denial adds a trial to the queue (NJDG, Oct 2026)

below 1%

of criminal cases ended in a guilty plea in 2022 — the rest were left for trial (19,135 of 1.7 crore)

5.9 crore

cases pending across district courts and High Courts — because denying costs nothing (NJDG, Oct 2026)

80–95%

plead guilty in the US, Canada and Australia, where admitting guilt early earns a lighter sentence

Why is lying rampant in Indian courts?

- Perjury is effectively **risk-free**.
- **BNSS s. 215** makes **32 obstruction-of-justice laws toothless** for lies told in or about a court case — neither the victim nor the police can set them in motion.
- **Only the court** can start a perjury case — the **judge has to become the complainant**, so it rarely happens.
- So the guilty deny, delay and wait — and the queue grows.

NCRB, 2022; NJDG, October 2026; Indian Express, 11 May 2026; *Swaran Singh v. State of Punjab* (2000) 5 SCC 668.

The two-part reform:
Reward truth, punish courtroom lies

PHASE 1 Start now — the High Court's Practice Direction

01	**Victim heard, not vetoing** — heard on record; compensation fixed by the court at sentencing, never a precondition of the plea. The accused may always plead guilty to the charge as framed
02	**Compulsory plea notice** to every accused — by the Magistrate, with legal-aid counsel, a right-to-silence caution and a perjury warning; not by the police
03	**Defined stages** for a plea, each with its own concession — within the statutory range, through the Guidelines
04	**Cooperation agreements and immunity**
05	**Sentencing Guidelines** — a calculator for predictable concessions; a remorseful first plea lands in the lowest band
06	**A lie on the record costs** — aggravation under the Guidelines, never absorbed into the main sentence; a 15-day safe-harbour notice from the court's Truth Officer, then the Magistrate
07	**Perjury benches** — s. 379 references tracked and tried in weeks, not after the main trial

PHASE 2 Lock in and widen — the Satyug Bill

01	**Victim's right to complain** — open BNSS s. 215 to the people a lie harms, with leave of the court. The Supreme Court can read it down first in the two pending petitions
02	**Widen covered offences** — lift the s. 289 seven-year ceiling and blanket exclusions; judicial scrutiny case by case
03	**Stage-graded discount schedule** written into s. 293 — larger before charge, smaller before evidence, none after
04	**'Heard, no veto' in ss. 290–291** and a 30-day right to set aside an involuntary plea (s. 295)
05	**Hostile witnesses and withdrawals** — a recorded statement stands when a witness turns; obstruction offences cannot be compounded or quashed on compromise
06	**Statutory safe harbour** with costs on frivolous complaints, and a higher tariff for lies on the record

Phase 1 starts under existing law — the plea pays and the lie already costs.
Phase 2 makes it permanent, nationwide and wider.

How a court case moves today — versus after the reform

Today — deny and delay

New case or complaint

↓

Reply — **deny everything**
no action on false denials

↓

Admit guilt?

✕ **No** — **Yes** ✓

TRIAL	PLEA
99.9%	**0.11%**
wait for trial	plead guilty

✕ **Perjury prosecution restricted**

5.9 crore pending ·
1 case in 900 ends by plea

After reform — truth wins

New case or complaint

↓

Reply — **may stay silent**
a sworn lie now costs

↓

Admit guilt?

✕ **No** — **Yes** ✓

TRIAL	PLEA
<10%	**90%+**
goal: go to trial	goal: plead guilty

✓ **Perjury used as a shortcut offence to prosecute**

Goal: justice within a year ·
9 in 10 resolved without trial

How incentives change for everyone — truth becomes the smarter choice

GUILTY ACCUSED

- ✕ Deny and delay
- ✓ **Plead early for a published discount**

The concession is calculable; a sworn lie on the record now costs. Silence stays free.

WITNESS

- ✕ Turn hostile, with no consequence
- ✓ **Recorded truth stands; flipping a statement costs**

Fifteen days to correct; then the record stands.

CO-CONSPIRATOR

- ✕ Stay silent together
- ✓ **Race to cooperate first**

The first to cooperate earns the largest credit.

COMPLAINANT

- ✕ File a false FIR at no consequence
- ✓ **Complain only what is true**

A false charge goes to the Magistrate on the court's complaint; under the Bill the person accused can complain too.

The innocent are protected by design: silence stays protected, no inference from a declined plea, every plea's facts verified, a correction window for honest mistakes, and, for anyone in custody, bond and a lawyer before any plea — Articles 20(3) and 21 untouched.

✕ today's rational move · ✓ the rational move under Satyug.

Will punishing courtroom lies flood the courts?

No — it shrinks the backlog

The 15-day safe harbour: time to correct the record.

Fix the record — **no offence**.
Persist after notice — **has consequences**.

Action starts only where falsehood is *prima facie* visible on the record. Frivolous complaints die at the threshold, with costs.

01 It removes unwarranted cases

Contradictions from memory, confusion or translation are corrected — and no proceeding begins.

02 It shows the intent

Persistence after a recorded notice is evidence of deliberate, knowing falsehood.

03 It protects the honest witness

Silence draws no inference, and a mistake corrected in time is never an offence.

Compare the US recantation defence, 18 U.S.C. §1623(d).

What the model suggests — to be tested in a pilot

Measure	Before	After
Convictions by plea	**1–2%**	**about 87%** with the Bill, in the model
Practice Direction alone no Bill needed	**0.11%**	**1 in 11 cases** at today's wait; half to three-quarters with a fresh-case list
Cases that need a trial	**99.9%**	**4× fewer** 10× at 90% pleas
Wait for a fresh case	**9 years**	**about 6 months** on the fresh-case list

No new courts

or judges needed; counsel and training from existing budgets

Starts now

courts and government can launch plea notices and sentence calculators today, under existing law

Rs 3–4 lakh crore

of assets unlocked from litigation

Satyug equilibrium model v2.7, revision 12a (Volume 3; satyug-sim.pages.dev): calibrated scenarios, not forecasts. The pilot measures the real figures.

What India gains — investment, jobs and better governance

INVESTMENT

163rd

of 190 countries on enforcing contracts: 1,445 days to enforce one[1]

AFTER THE REFORM

When lying in court costs, false defences collapse and contracts are enforced sooner. **Capital goes where disputes end.**

BUSINESS

7.5% of GDP

Rs 24.7 lakh crore locked in disputes at commercial tribunals (2024–25)[2], plus 43 lakh cheque-bounce cases pending[3]

AFTER THE REFORM

False defences in cheque-bounce and recovery cases stop paying, so **money stuck in disputes goes back to work.**

JOBS AND LIVELIHOODS

25%

of a year's earnings spent attending court, for litigants earning under Rs 1 lakh[4]

AFTER THE REFORM

Fewer hearings mean fewer lost workdays. Firms that can enforce a contract **expand where they are, and hire.**

CORRUPTION AND TAX EVASION

91st

of 182 on corruption[5]; Rs 7.08 lakh crore of GST evasion found in five years[6]

AFTER THE REFORM

A false declaration, a fake invoice or a perjured defence can be prosecuted by those it harms. **The deny-and-delay shield is gone.**

CONTRACTS, CHEQUES, DECREES

The cost of a lie applies wherever evidence is given: a false denial in a contract suit, a cheque-bounce trial or an execution proceeding carries the same cost as in a criminal trial.

1 World Bank, Doing Business 2020 · **2** DAKSH, State of Tribunals 2025 (Rs 24.72 lakh crore = 7.48% of GDP) · **3** Law Ministry reply in Parliament, 20 Dec 2024 · **4** DAKSH Access to Justice Survey 2016 · **5** Transparency International CPI 2025 · **6** Lok Sabha reply, Aug 2025. Gains are projections.

Make in India | Startup India | $5 trillion economy | Viksit Bharat @2047

Enforceability of contracts — is a prerequisite

TODAY

43 lakh
cheque-bounce cases pending in the courts

12+ years
for a case to pass through three courts; India ranked 163rd of 190 on enforcing contracts

7.95 lakh
court decrees wait over six months just to be executed

Delaware USA

A small state with a court business trusts: fast, expert, predictable.

68.2%
of the Fortune 500 incorporate there, worth about $1.9 billion a year to the state

Singapore ASIA'S HUB

Built courts and arbitration that respect deadlines and contracts, and marketed them to the world.

#1
arbitration seat worldwide (tied with London); 625 new cases in 2024, 91% international

London COMMERCIAL COURT

Centuries of reliable judgments made English law the default for global contracts.

61.7%
of litigants come from outside the UK, from 93 nationalities in a year

Competitive federalism: the first State to pilot Satyug can become India's Delaware.

Indian companies take their disputes to Singapore today. A State whose courts enforce on time can bring them home.

Delaware 2025; QMUL 2021; SIAC 2024; Portland 2025; World Bank 2020; DAKSH 2023; Law Ministry, Dec 2024; SC, *Periyammal*, 10 Apr 2026.

How to make this happen — four actions, three need no new law

Who	What it is	Legislation	When
1 · Supreme Court WP(C) 209 and WP(Crl) 111/2026	Read down ss. 215 and 379; direct the Magistrate's plea notice; adopt the National Sentencing Guidelines, 2026 with Rule 14 and the calculator (Forms PSC and PSC(A)) as Art. 142 directions	None	Next hearing
2 · Union Executive MHA and Department of Justice	Constitute the committee the Lok Sabha resolution asks for; notify a prosecution plea SOP and a s. 379 SOP; pilot in the Union Territories; public register on NJDG	None	Within 30 days
3 · Parliament The Satyug Bill	The *Prevention of False Statement and Obstruction of Justice (Satyug) Bill*: BNSS ch. XXIII and ss. 215 and 379, with a 15-day safe harbour; statutory footing for the Sentencing Guidelines, 2026	BNSS amendment	Winter Session
4 · Willing States High Courts and State Home Departments	High Court Practice Direction adopting the Guidelines with Rule 14 (Art. 227, s. 529 BNSS): plea notice, Truth Officer's 15-day notice, fresh-case list; optional State amendment under Art. 254(2)	None; State Bill optional	Within 60 days

MILESTONES

6 months
Directions and SOP live; first pleas recorded; Bill introduced

12 months
1 in 10 eligible cases settled by plea; Bill passed

24 months
1 in 4 nationally; Phase 2 in force

Milestones toward the 90% goal, set after a 60-day baseline. The Satyug Bill and the Sentencing Guidelines, 2026 are drafted.

Already in motion — key milestones

Jul 2006	**Parliament.** Plea bargaining enters the CrPC; carried into BNSS ch. XXIII.
Jan 2023	**Law Ministry.** Department of Justice field study finds it barely used.
13 Feb 2026	**Lok Sabha.** Resolution on record: task force on ss. 215 and 379; "10 to 20 times faster".
26 Feb 2026	**Supreme Court.** Notice in WP(C) 209/2026 to the Union and **all 28 States**.
14 Mar 2026	**Attorney General R. Venkataramani.** Calls for a national plea-bargaining protocol.
24 Mar 2026	**Supreme Court.** Notice in WP(Crl) 111/2026 on ss. 215 and 379.
May 2026	**Home Ministry.** Announces a stakeholder conference; yet to be held.
24 Sep 2026	**Supreme Court.** Chief Justice's Bench grants listing in WP(C) 209/2026.

TEAM SATYUG INITIATIVES

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Truth alone triumphs — Mundaka Upanishad 3.1.6

Truth as the default.
Justice within a year.

TEAM सतयुग

Thank you!

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