

AIR Spotlight: Year End Review of the Ministry of Law and Justice

AIR Spotlight is an insightful program featured daily on the All India Radio Newsonair. In this program, many eminent panellists discuss issues of importance which can be quite helpful in [IAS exam](#) preparation.

This article features an exclusive interview with the Union Minister, Ashwini Vaishnaw on 'Initiatives and Achievements of the Ministry of Law and Justice'.

Participants:

1. Kiren Rijiju, Minister of State for Law and Justice
2. Omvesh Upadhyay, AIR Correspondent

Introduction:

- The public-centric approach is smoothening the judicial system for all or the Ease of justice.
- In the year 2022, the Ministry of Law and Justice launched the new Divyang-friendly website to provide citizens with a one-stop solution for justice delivery services.
- Indian judiciary is a very robust system, but to make it more accessible the platforms and procedures should be made easier to use. In this direction, several websites and mobile apps are created that are not only accessible to everyone but also easy to interpret and communicate for specially-abled people (Divyangs).

Key Initiatives of the Ministry of Law and Justice:

On 16th July 2022, [National Legal Services Authority \(NALSA\)](#) launched an initiative called Release_UTRC@75 for identifying eligible prisoners and recommending the release of fit cases to the Under Trial Review Committee.

- This initiative would ensure that people waiting for justice for a long time and languishing in jails due to lack of legal services or aid are provided such services and released timely.
- It should be noted that Indian prisons are already very crowded beyond their capacities.

It was also advised that the District Judges should be more active during trials and release all those people who have already served their tenure.

The Government of India is also promoting Ease of Justice. It should be noted that Ease of Justice is a larger concept that provides changes/reforms to make the life of citizens easy and further promote Ease of living.

Indian Government has also removed several provisions of the law that created difficulties for the justice delivery as well as people. For instance,

- Several provisions of the Commercial Laws were removed.
- Some compliances like the Attestation procedure were eliminated.
- Multiple Archaic laws or provisions of British times were removed. Almost 1486 archaic laws that were redundant or not required anymore were removed.
- In the Winter session of the parliament 65 laws are proposed for removal, which will be taken up in the next session.
- The authorities are also clear that the government should be intervening in the minimum possible ways in the life of common people.
- ***India International Arbitration Centre:***
 - India has the largest number of litigations and the highest number of pendency in the world. In order to address these concerns [Alternative Dispute Resolution mechanisms](#) are considered.
 - Alternate Dispute Resolution mechanisms are different from the formal court procedure.
 - India has a long tradition of mediation. Even in ancient India mediation was used to settle disputes. A Mediation bill has been introduced in the Parliament.
 - India International Arbitration Centre is established in New Delhi. Moreover, there are many Arbitration centres that are functioning across the country in an ad-hoc manner.
 - Arbitration can also attract the global community, especially at this juncture when India is climbing the economic ladder.
- ***National Mission for Safety of Women***
 - The safety of Women is the priority of the government as well as society.
 - The government has taken several steps in this regard. For instance, Criminal Act was amended in 2018
 - The National Mission for Safety of Women is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme where the Union Government is setting up 1023 Fast Track Special courts.
 - The government has also asked the State and UT governments to establish [Fast Track Courts](#). Some states have performed very well, but some states are lagging behind.
 - The speedy justice delivery to Women is extremely essential as crimes against women are one of the major yardsticks to check the progress of society.

Associated challenges:

- The major reform that the Ministry of Law and justice is looking forward to is to make the Collegium system more accountable and transparent.

- It should be noted that the Indian Judiciary is widely respected because it is independent. Any decision of the court is final unless it is overruled by a larger bench or the higher judiciary.
- It is argued that the Constitution clearly stated that the appointment of the judges was the responsibility of the Executive (The President of India) in consultation with the Chief Justice of India. However, in the three Judges Case and specifically the Second Judges Case, the Collegium system was introduced.
- Thus there are demands from the ministry that this issue of opacity in Judicial appointments should be resolved. It would also ease the burden on the Senior judges and they can focus more on the cases.

G20 Presidency of India and Ministry of Law and Justice Role:

- G20 is not just the programme of government alone but is a national call to rise to the occasion and take responsibility.
- All the Ministries are equal stakeholders in this endeavour. India has the opportunity to showcase its rich heritage and the inherent capability of its soft power.