

वार्षिक रिपोर्ट ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24



भारत सरकार

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

विधि और न्याय मंत्रालय
Ministry of Law and Justice



Annual Report 2023-2024

**Government of India
Ministry of Law And Justice**

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CHAPTER - I

LEGISLATIVE DEPARTMENT

Legislative Department is primarily mandated to provide assistance to the Union Government in drafting of its legislations and processing the legislative business to be placed before the Parliament as per the priority of various administrative Departments and Ministries.

1. FUNCTIONS

1.1 The Legislative Department is concerned with the following matters, namely:-

- (i) Scrutiny of Notes for the Cabinet pertaining to all legislative proposals from drafting angle;
- (ii) Drafting and scrutiny of all Government Bills including Constitution (Amendment) Bills, translation of all the Bills into Hindi and forwarding of both the English and the Hindi versions of the Bills to the Lok Sabha or Rajya Sabha Secretariat as the case may be for introduction in Parliament; drafting of official amendments to the Bills; scrutiny of non-official amendments and rendering assistance to administrative Ministries/Departments to decide the acceptability or otherwise of non-official amendments;
- (iii) Rendering assistance to Parliament and its Joint/ Select Committees at all stages through which a Bill passes before enactment. This includes scrutiny of, and assistance in preparation of reports and revision of Bills for the Committees;
- (iv) Drafting of Ordinances to be promulgated by the President;
- (v) Drafting of legislation to be enacted as President's Acts in respect of States under President's rule;
- (vi) Drafting of Regulations to be made by the President;
- (vii) Drafting of Constitution Orders, i.e. Orders required to be issued under the Constitution;
- (viii) Scrutiny and vetting of all statutory rules, regulations, orders, notifications, resolutions, schemes, etc., and their translation into Hindi;
- (ix) Scrutiny of State legislation in the concurrent field, which requires assent of the President under article 254 of the Constitution;
- (x) Scrutiny of legislation to be enacted by the Union territory Legislatures;
- (xi) Elections to Parliament, the Legislatures of States and Union territories and Offices of the President and Vice-President;
- (xii) Determination of expenditure on elections between the Union and the States/Union territories having Legislatures;
- (xiii) Election Commission of India and electoral reforms;
- (xiv) Administration of the Representation of the People Act, 1950; the Representation of the People Act, 1951;

- (xv) Matters relating to The Chief Election Commissioner And Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service And Term of Office) Act, 2023
- (xvi) Matters relating to the Delimitation of Parliamentary and Legislative Assembly Constituencies;
- (xvii) Legislation on matters relating to personal laws, transfer of property, contracts, evidence, civil procedure, etc., in the Concurrent List of the Seventh Schedule to the Constitution;
- (xviii) Imparting training in legislative drafting to the officers of the Union/State Governments, etc;
- (xix) Publication of Central Acts, Ordinances and Regulations and their authorised translations in Hindi and other languages specified in the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution and also translation of legal and statutory documents.
- (xx) Publication of Hindi translation of selected judgments of the Supreme Court and High Courts on cases pertaining to constitutional, civil and criminal laws in the form of law Journals (Patrikas).

1.2 Legislative Department does not have any statutory or autonomous body under its control. It has two other wings under it, namely, the Official Languages Wing (OLW) and Vidhi Sahitya Prakashan (VSP), which are responsible for propagation of Hindi and other Official Languages in the field of law.

- (i) **Official Languages Wing** of the Legislative Department is responsible for preparing and publishing standard legal terminology and also for translating into Hindi, all the Bills to be introduced in Parliament, all Central Acts, Ordinances, Subordinate legislations, etc., as required under the Official Languages Act, 1963. This Wing is also responsible for arranging translation of the Central Acts, Ordinances, etc., into the Official Languages as specified in the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution and also as required under the Authoritative Texts (Central Laws) Act, 1973.
- (ii) **Vidhi Sahitya Prakashan** is mainly concerned with bringing out authoritative Hindi versions of reportable judgements of the Supreme Court and the High Courts with the objective of promoting the progressive use of Hindi in the legal field. Vidhi Sahitya Prakashan brings out various publications of legal literature in Hindi. It also holds exhibitions in various States for giving wide publicity to legal literatures available in Hindi and to promote their sales.

2. ORGANISATIONAL SET UP

The organisational set-up of the Legislative Department includes the Secretary, Additional Secretary, Joint Secretary and Legislative Counsel, Additional Legislative Counsel, Deputy Legislative Counsel and Assistant Legislative Counsel and other supporting staff. The works relating to legislative drafting in the case of principal legislation and to scrutinizing and vetting of subordinate legislation have been distributed among various Legislative Groups. Each Legislative Group is headed by a Joint Secretary and Legislative Counsel or Additional Secretary, as the case may be, who in turn are assisted by a number of Legislative Counsels at different levels. The Secretary of the Legislative Department acts as the Chief Parliamentary Counsel and the Additional Secretary is in charge of all subordinate legislation. The Organisational Chart of the Legislative Department is at Annexure-VI.

3. LEGISLATIVE-I SECTION

Legislation is one of the major instruments of articulating the policy of the Government. In this context, the Legislative Department plays an important role to secure the policy objectives, which the Government may wish to achieve through legislation.

- (1) Legislative Department not only performs functions as the primary Department for drafting the legislation initiated by the administrative Ministries and Departments but also initiates legislative proposals in respect of the matters with which it is administratively concerned.
- (2) Legislative Department drafts the Finance Bill to give effect to the financial proposals of the Central Government every year. This exercise is undertaken in the Legislative Department on the budget proposals being brought before it by the Ministry of Finance. For the purpose of convenience, the various subjects on which Bills are drafted in the Legislative Department at the behest of administrative Ministries/ Departments can be broadly categorised as under:-
 - (a) Constitutional amendments;
 - (b) Economic and corporate laws;
 - (c) Civil Procedure and other social welfare legislation;
 - (d) Criminal laws;
 - (e) Repeal of obsolete laws; and
 - (f) Miscellaneous laws.
- (3) During the period from 1st January, 2023 to 31st March, 2024, this Department has examined 140 Notes for the Cabinet/new legislative proposals in consultation with different Ministries/Departments for drafting Bill or Ordinances promulgated by the President for introduction in the Houses of the Parliament. Legislative Bills which are 56 in number were forwarded to Parliament for introduction during this period. The list of Bills forwarded to Parliament during this period is as follows:-

Bills forwarded to Parliament for introduction during 01.01.2023 to 31.03.2024

Sl. No.	Titles
1.	The Finance Bill, 2023
2.	The Constitution (Jammu and Kashmir) Scheduled Castes Order (Amendment) Bill, 2023
3.	The Inter-Services Organisations (Command, Control and Discipline) Bill, 2023
4.	The Appropriation Bill, 2023
5.	The Appropriation (No.2) Bill, 2023
6.	The Jammu and Kashmir Appropriation Bill, 2023
7.	The Jammu and Kashmir Appropriation (No.2) Bill, 2023
8.	The Forest (Conservation) Amendment Bill, 2023

9.	The Coastal Aquaculture Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2023
10.	The National Dental Commission Bill, 2023
11.	The National Nursing and Midwifery Commission Bill, 2023
12.	The Cinematograph (Amendment) Bill, 2023
13.	The Jammu and Kashmir Reservation (Amendment) Bill, 2023
14.	The Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order (Amendment) Bill, 2023
15.	The Registration of Birth and Deaths (Amendment) Bill, 2023
16.	The Constitution (Jammu and Kashmir) Scheduled Tribes Order (Amendment) Bill, 2023
17.	The Offshore Areas Mineral (Development and Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2023
18.	The Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2023
19.	The Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill, 2023
20.	The Indian Institute of Management (Amendment) Bill, 2023
21.	The Advocates (Amendment) Bill, 2023
22.	The Press and Registration of Periodicals Bill, 2023
23.	The Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Bill, 2023
24.	The Digital Personal Data Protection Bill, 2023
25.	The Pharmacy (Amendment) Bill, 2023
26.	The Anusandhan National Research Foundation Bill, 2023
27.	The Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Condition of Services and Term of Office) Bill, 2023
28.	The Post Office Bill, 2023
29.	The Central Goods and Services Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2023
30.	The Integrated Goods and Services Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2023
31.	The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023
32.	The Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023
33.	The Bharatiya Sakshya Bill, 2023
34.	The Constitution (One Hundred and Twenty Eighth) Amendment Bill, 2023
35.	The Central Universities (Amendment) Bill, 2023
36.	The Appropriation (No.3) Bill, 2023
37.	The Appropriation (No.4) Bill, 2023

38.	The Provisional Collection of Taxes Bill, 2023
39.	The Central Goods and Services Tax (Second) Amendment Bill, 2023
40.	The Government of Union Territories (Amendment) Bill, 2023
41.	The Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Second Amendment) Bill, 2023
42.	The Bharatiya Nyaya (Second) Sanhita, 2023
43.	The Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha (Second) Sanhita, 2023
44.	The Bharatiya Sakshya (Second) Bill, 2023
45.	The National Capital Territory of Delhi Laws (Special Provisions) (Second) Amendment Bill, 2023
46.	The Telecommunications Bill, 2023
47.	The Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Bill, 2024
48.	The Finance Bill, 2024
49.	The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Amendment Bill, 2024
50.	The Constitution (Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes) Orders (Amendment) Bill, 2024
51.	The Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Orders (Amendment) Bill, 2024
52.	The Appropriation Bill, 2024
53.	The Jammu and Kashmir Appropriation Bill, 2024
54.	The Appropriation (Vote on Account) Bill, 2024
55.	The Jammu and Kashmir Appropriation (No. 2) Bill, 2024
56.	The Jammu and Kashmir Local Bodies Law (Amendment) Bill, 2024

- (5) Out of the Bills which were pending before Parliament and those introduced, 63 Bills have been enacted into Acts along with one Constitutional Amendment Act. The list of the Acts enacted during this period is as follow:-

Acts enacted

Sl. No.	Title of the Act
1.	The Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order (Second Amendment) Act, 2022 (Act No. 1 of 2023)
2.	The Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order (Fourth Amendment) Act, 2022 (Act No. 2 of 2023)
3.	The Maritime Anti-Piracy Act, 2022 (Act No. 3 of 2023)
4.	The Appropriation Act, 2023 (Act No. 4 of 2023)
5.	The Appropriation (No.2) Act, 2023 (Act No. 5 of 2023)
6.	The Jammu and Kashmir Appropriation (No.2) Act, 2023 (Act No. 6 of 2023)

7.	The Jammu and Kashmir Appropriation Act, 2023 (Act No. 7 of 2023)
8.	The Finance Act, 2023 (Act No. 8 of 2023)
9.	The Competition (Amendment) Act, 2023 (Act No.9 of 2023)
10.	The Biological Diversity (Amendment) Act, 2023 (Act No.10 of 2023)
11.	The Multi-State Cooperative Societies (Amendment) Act, 2023 (Act No.11 of 2023)
12.	The Cinematograph (Amendment) Act, 2023 (Act No.12 of 2023)
13.	The Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order (Amendment) Act, 2023 (Act No.13 of 2023)
14.	The Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order (Second Amendment) Act, 2023 (Act No.14 of 2023)
15.	Forest (Conservation) Amendment Act, 2023 (Act No.15 of 2023)
16.	The Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2023 (Act No.16 of 2023)
17.	The Offshore Areas Mineral (Development and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2023 (Act No.17 of 2023)
18.	Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Act, 2023 (Act No.18 of 2023)
19.	The Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Act, 2023 (Act No.19 of 2023)
20.	The Registration of Births and Deaths (Amendment) Act, 2023 (Act No.20 of 2023)
21.	The National Dental Commission Act, 2023 (Act No.21 of 2023)
22.	The Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 (Act No.22 of 2023)
23.	The Indian Institute of Management (Amendment) Act, 2023 (Act No.23 of 2023)
24.	The Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order (Amendment) Act, 2023 (Act No.24 of 2023)
25.	The Anusandhan National Research Foundation Act, 2023 (Act No.25 of 2023)
26.	The National Nursing and Midwifery Commission Act, 2023 (Act No.26 of 2023)
27.	The Coastal Aquaculture Authority (Amendment) Act, 2023 (Act No.27 of 2023)
28.	The Inter-Services Organisations (Command, Control and Discipline) Act, 2023 (Act No.28 of 2023)
29.	The Pharmacy (Amendment) Act, 2023 (Act No.29 of 2023)
30.	The Central Goods and Services Tax (Amendment) Act, 2023 (Act No.30 of 2023)
31.	The Integrated Goods and Services Tax (Amendment) Act, 2023 (Act No.31 of 2023)
32.	The Mediation Act, 2023 (Act No.32 of 2023)
33.	The Advocates (Amendment) Act, 2023 (Act No.33 of 2023)
34.	The Jammu and Kashmir Reservation (Amendment) Act, 2023 (Act No.34 of 2023)
35.	The Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Amendment) Act, 2023 (Act No.35 of 2023)
36.	The Central Universities (Amendment) Act, 2023 (Act No.36 of 2023)

37.	The Repealing and Amending Act, 2023 (Act No.37 of 2023)
38.	The Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Second Amendment) Act, 2023 (Act No.38 of 2023)
39.	The Government of Union Territories (Amendment) Act, 2023 (Act No.39 of 2023)
40.	The Appropriation (No. 3) Act, 2023 (Act No.40 of 2023)
41.	The Appropriation (No. 4) Act, 2023 (Act No.41 of 2023)
42.	The National Capital Territory of Delhi Laws (Special Provisions) Second (Amendment) Act, 2023 (Act No.42 of 2023)
43.	The Post Office Act, 2023 (Act No.43 of 2023)
44.	The Telecommunications Act, 2023 (Act No.44 of 2023)
45.	The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 (Act No.45 of 2023)
46.	The Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 (Act No.46 of 2023)
47.	The Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023 (Act No.47 of 2023)
48.	The Central Goods and Services Tax (Second Amendment) Act, 2023 (Act No.48 of 2023)
49.	The Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Condition of Services and Term of Office) Act, 2023 (Act No.49 of 2023)
50.	The Provisional Collection of Taxes Act, 2023 (Act No.50 of 2023)
51.	The Press and Registration of Periodicals Act, 2023 (Act No.51 of 2023)
52.	The Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024 (Act No.1 of 2024)
53.	The Jammu and Kashmir Local Bodies Law (Amendment) Act, 2024 (Act No.2 of 2024)
54.	The Constitution (Jammu and Kashmir) Scheduled Tribes Order (Amendment) Act, 2024 (Act No.3 of 2024)
55.	The Constitution (Jammu and Kashmir) Scheduled Castes Order (Amendment) Act, 2024 (Act No.4 of 2024)
56.	The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) (Amendment) Act, 2024 (Act No.5 of 2024)
57.	The Constitution (Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes) Orders (Amendment) Act, 2024 (Act No.6 of 2024)
58.	The Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Orders (Amendment) Act, 2024 (Act No.7 of 2024)
59.	The Finance Act, 2024 (Act No.8 of 2024)
60.	The Appropriation (Vote on Account) Act, 2024 (Act No.9 of 2024)
61.	The Appropriation Act, 2024 (Act No.10 of 2024)
62.	The Jammu and Kashmir Appropriation Act, 2024 (Act No.11 of 2024)
63.	The Jammu and Kashmir Appropriation (No. 2) Act, 2024 (Act No.12 of 2024)

Constitution Amendment Act

Sl. No.	Title of the Act
1.	The Constitution (One Hundred and Sixth) Amendment Act, 2023

(6) One Ordinance has been promulgated by the President under article 123 of the Constitution:-

Ordinances promulgated

Sl. No.	Title of the Ordinance
1.	The Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Ordinance, 2023

(7) Four regulations have been issued under article 240 of the Constitution:-

Regulations issued

Sl. No.	Title of the Regulation
1.	The Laccadive, Minicoy and Aminidivi Island Land Revenue and Tenancy (Amendment) Regulation, 2023
2.	The Andaman and Nicobar Island Tenancy Regulation, 2023
3.	The Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu Tenancy Regulation, 2023
4.	The Lakshadweep Tenancy Regulation, 2023

(8) SUBORDINATE LEGISLATION

During the period from 1st January, 2023 to 31st March, 2024, the total number of 3089 subordinate legislations including statutory rules, regulations, orders and notifications scrutinized and vetted by this Department.

(9) REPEAL OF OBSOLETE LAWS

The Repealing and Amending Bill, 2023 for repeal of 76 Acts was considered and passed by the Lok Sabha on 27.07.2023 and the Rajya Sabha on 13.12.2023. After assent of the Hon'ble President on 17.12.2023, the said Bill has been enacted as the Repealing and Amending Act, 2023 (Act No. 37 of 2023).

4. LEGISLATIVE II SECTION

(1) ELECTION LAWS AND ELECTORAL REFORMS

The Legislative II Section of the Department is administratively concerned with the following Acts in connection with the conduct of elections to Parliament, State Legislatures and to the offices of the President and the Vice-President, reform of laws/rules made thereunder and matters pertaining/incidental thereto:

- (i) The Representation of the People Act, 1950,
- (i) The Representation of the People Act, 1951,
- (ii) The Presidential and Vice-Presidential Elections Act, 1952,
- (iii) The Delimitation Act, 2002,
- (iv) The Andhra Pradesh Legislative Council Act, 2005,
- (v) The Tamil Nadu Legislative Council Act, 2010.

(2) The electoral system of our country, which is also called the first-past-the-post system of elections, has completed seventy five years. We have covered the journey of these seventy five years after India became Republic with glory and exemplary successes in all the fields. This has been the result of the relentless toil and continuous struggle of the millions who have shaped the present and future of this great country with their sweat and blood. Undoubtedly, this journey has not been an easy sail and we have witnessed much turbulence and turmoil during this period. During this period, the political scenario and the electoral process of the country have undergone continuous epoch-making changes. With each election, the complexities of the electoral process and the election management have been increasing. Every single ballot has proved extremely valuable.

(3) The aforesaid scenario, which has been continuously changing, has necessitated reforms of electoral laws on several occasions. In the light of the experience gained during elections, recommendations of the Election Commission, the proposals from different sources including political parties, eminent personalities in public life, the deliberations in the Legislatures and various public bodies, the successive Governments have taken a number of measures, from time to time, to bring about electoral reforms.

(4) The Constitution (One-Hundred and Sixth Amendment) Act, 2023 (Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam)

The Parliament has enacted the Constitution (One-Hundred and Sixth Amendment) Act, 2023 on 28th September, 2024 to enhance women's participation in the governance of the country by providing reservation of seats as nearly as may be one-third of the total seats for women in the House of the People (Lok Sabha) and State Legislative Assemblies and the Legislative Assembly of the National Capital Territory and ushering the country towards the glorious 'Amritkal'. The reservation of seats for women shall cease to have effect on the expiration of fifteen years from such commencement. However, Parliament may extend this period through further legislation. Rotation of seats reserved for women shall take effect after each subsequent exercise of delimitation as the Parliament may by law determine. The reservation of seats for women in Puducherry Legislative Assembly has also been enacted by the Parliament.

(5) ONE NATION ONE ELECTION

A synchronous elections of the House of the People and State Legislative Assemblies (including bye-election) result in prolonged enforcement of Model Code of Conduct with its concomitant adverse impact on developmental and welfare programmes. Thus a High Level Committee (HLC) was constituted on 02nd September, 2023, vide resolution No. 11019/03/2023 under the Chairmanship of Shri Ram Nath Kovind, former President of India to examine the possibility of holding synchronized elections, which may result in

huge saving to the public exchequer and avoidance of replication of effort on part of administration. The recommendations of the High Level Committee are as follows:

- (a) The Committee recommends that in the first step, simultaneous elections to the House of the People and the State Legislative Assemblies be held. In the second step, the elections to Municipalities and Panchayats will be synchronized with House of People and State Legislative Assemblies in such a way that Municipalities and Panchayat elections are held within hundred days of the holding of elections of the House of the People and the State Legislative Assemblies.
- (b) To take the first step, that is, for the purpose of synchronisation of elections to the House of the People and State Legislative Assemblies, the Committee recommends that the President of India may, by notification, issued on the date of the first sitting of the House of the People after a General election, bring into force the provision of this Article, and that date of the notification shall be called the 'Appointed Date'.
- (c) The tenure of all State Legislative Assemblies, constituted by elections to the State Legislative Assemblies after the Appointed Date and before the expiry of the full term of the House of the People, shall be only for the period ending up to the subsequent General elections to the House of the People.
- (d) Thereafter, all General elections to the House of the People and all State Legislative Assemblies shall be held together simultaneously.
- (e) To take the second step, the Committee recommends introduction of Article 324A for enabling simultaneous elections in Panchayats and Municipalities with the General elections of the House of the People and the State Legislative Assemblies and amendment in Article 325 for enabling Single Electoral Roll and Single Elector's Photo Identity Card, which shall be prepared by the Election Commission of India in consultation with the State Election Commission(s) and the same will substitute any other electoral roll prepared by Election Commission of India under Article 325 or State Election Commission(s) under Articles 243K and 243ZA of the Constitution of India.
- (f) Since the second step requires the amendments to touch upon State subjects (Entry 5) of Schedule VII, Part IX, and Part IX A of the Constitution of India, ratification by the States will be required under Article 368(2) of the Constitution of India. However, implementing the first step, that is, simultaneous elections to House of the People and State Legislative Assemblies, does not necessitate ratification by the States.
- (g) For the purpose of conducting simultaneous elections, the Committee also recommends that an Implementation Group may be constituted which shall look into the execution of the recommendations given by the Committee.
- (h) The Committee recommends that in the event of a hung House, no- confidence motion, or any such event, fresh elections may be held to constitute the new House. Where fresh elections are held for the House of the People, the tenure of the House of the People will be only for the unexpired term of the immediately preceding full term of the House of the People and the expiration of this period shall operate as a dissolution of the House
- (i) Where fresh elections are held for the State Legislative Assemblies. then such new Legislative

Assembly unless sooner dissolved, shall continue upto the end of the full term of the House of the People.

(j) The Committee recommends that a Constitution Amendment Bill will have to be introduced in the Parliament amending Article 83 (Duration of Houses of Parliament) and Article 172 (Duration of State Legislatures). This Constitutional Amendment will not need ratification by the States.

(k) The Committee recommends that for making logistical arrangements for the conduct of simultaneous elections to the House of the People and State Legislative Assemblies, the Election Commission of India may draw a plan and estimate in advance for the procurement of equipment, such as EVMs and VVPATs, deployment of polling personnel and security forces, and make other necessary arrangements.

(l) Similarly, for the elections to Municipalities and Panchayats, the Committee recommends that the State Election Commission(s), in consultation with the Election Commission of India, may draw a plan and estimate in advance for the procurement of equipment, such as EVMs and VVPATs, deployment of polling personnel and security forces, and make other necessary arrangements.

The Committee has since submitted its report to the Hon'ble President on 14th March, 2024.

(6) DELIMITATION of PARLIAMENTARY AND ASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCIES IN ASSAM

The delimitation of Parliamentary Constituencies and Assembly Constituencies in the State of Assam has been carried out by the Election Commission of India in terms of section 8A of the Representation of the People Act, 1950 vide its order dated 20th June, 2023 and final order dated 11th August, 2023. The same has taken effect vide this Department's notification S.O. 3661(E) dated 16th August, 2023.

(7) AMENDMENT OF ELECTION LAWS

Rules 18A, 24, 27A and Form 13D of the Conduct of Elections Rules, 1961 have been amended by the Conduct of Elections (Amendment) Rules, 2023. Now, voters on an election duty can cast their vote at a facilitation center. Any Group A or Group B officer can attest the declaration made by a voter on election duty.

(8) On recommendation of the ECI, the Conduct of Elections Rules, 1961 has been amended by the Conduct of Elections (Amendment) Rules, 2024 and the same has been published in the Gazette of India (Extra-ordinary) vide notification S.O.(E) 995, dated 01st March, 2024. Now, the age limit for senior citizen to be eligible for postal ballot has been increased from 80 to 85 years.

(9) COURT CASES INVOLVING ELECTION LAWS

Legislative Department, being administratively in-charge of various election laws has also to handle various court cases involving validity of election laws. In the beginning of the year 2023, there were 141 cases pending in the Supreme Court and different High Courts on election related matters. During the said year, 45 fresh cases were received, in which appropriate actions have been taken. During the period (from January 2023 to March 2024), 31 cases have been disposed of. As on 01st April, 2024, there are about 155 cases pending before the Supreme Court and various High Courts. All cases are being effectively monitored.

(10) CONDUCT OF PARLIAMENTARY WORK

During the year 2023-24, the Legislative Department, which has been allocated the work of coordination/ conduct of parliamentary business of the Ministry of Law and Justice, handled the following:-

S. No.	Item of Business	Figures for the Ministry of Law and Justice.
1.	Lok Sabha Questions	299
2.	Rajya Sabha Questions.	223
3.	Private Members' Bill in Lok Sabha.	14
4.	Private Members' Bills in Rajya Sabha	20
5.	Private Members' Resolutions	03
6.	Matter raised during Zero Hour (Lok Sabha)	06
7.	Matter raised under Rule 377 in Lok Sabha.	15
8.	Special Mention in Rajya Sabha.	06

Election Commission of India

(11) Election Commission of India (ECI), since its establishment in 1950, has been instrumental in ensuring free, fair, and transparent elections in India. Articles 324 to 329 of the Constitution of India define the functions, responsibilities, structure and, powers of the ECI. These Articles, mandate the Commission to conduct elections to the Lower and Upper Houses of Parliament and State Legislative Assemblies and to the High offices of the President and Vice-President of India at regular intervals.

Election Commission is a permanent constitutional body. It consists of Chief Election Commissioner and two Election Commissioners. Over the past 75 years, the ECI has conducted 17 General Elections to the Lok Sabha and more than 400 elections to State Legislative Assemblies, in addition to 17 elections to the High office of the President and Vice-President. As a result of the sustained reform, India's electoral democracy has been a defining benchmark of electoral integrity at global level.

Since the first General Elections in 1951-52, the ECI has meticulously managed the entire election process, including planning, preparation, conducting, counting, and result declaration. The Commission in the last 75 years of its journey has achieved many milestones. Every election provided an opportunity and an occasion for the institution to enhance its services in ensuring a free, fair, transparent, inclusive, accessible, participative and an inducement free election. Akin to science laboratory, where experiments and research never cease, the Commission is constantly on the quest for innovations and improvement in electoral management.

The Commission in past few years, has adopted many initiatives and innovative measures to extend special facilitation to women, PwD and senior citizens such as AMF, ramps, wheelchair and volunteer assistance, priority voting, all women managed polling stations, all PwD managed polling stations, and the more recent amendments by which - home voting facility has been made available to senior citizens 80+, and PwD electors so they can vote from the comfort of their homes. All this, with one goal in mind, "No Voter to be left behind".



There has been a silent and a deep change in the manner in which elections are conducted and supervised. These changes play and bring efficiency to the structural, technological, administrative, communication, enforcement effectiveness and, capacity building reforms. Cumulatively, these individual reforms were implemented and tested during the 16 [9 in 2023 and 7 in 2022] State Assembly elections in 2022 and 2023. The success in these elections, augurs well for the preparation of the General Elections in 2024 (since held).

A healthy and inclusive Electoral roll forms the foundation of electoral integrity. In the past two years and in preparation to General Election 2024, the Commission has taken initiatives to update the electoral rolls and include all segments of vulnerable voters such as women, third gender, PwDs and tribals. Special efforts were undertaken for enrollment of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) in all States/UTs and, also to bring them to the booths. It is an exemplary commitment of ECI's "Roll to Poll" initiative.

The paradigm shifts in planning, dispersal and deployment of security forces, selection of right blend of machinery, regular reviews, and close monitoring has also led to reduction of violence in elections. The rigorous training of election staff ensures reduced procedural errors thus ensuring reduction in number of repolls.

The Commission's special thrust on inducement free elections is a sub-work against the abuse of money power in the elections and for ensuring a level playing field. With increasing number of enforcement agencies roped in the last two years and, integration of tech platform like Election Seizure Management System (ESMS), the Commission has ensured record seizures in the recently held State elections in 2023.

The Commission has been at the forefront of integrating technology in election management for all stakeholders. An ecosystem of IT applications like cVIGIL for citizens to report MCC violations, Suvidha for candidates, KYC to know candidate details, Saksham App for PwDs are designed to empower them and ensure transparency and level playing field. The ECI website and also results website has been completely redesigned and revamped for better experience and easy access to information with a focus on all stakeholders. The results website provided detailed AC/PC wise results and margin of victory amongst winning and losing candidates along with charts and graphics which were in a form of ready to use format for different stakeholders including media and political analysts.

Political parties are registered with the Election Commission under section 29A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951. The Election Commission ensures inner party democracy in their functioning by insisting upon them to hold organizational elections at periodic intervals. Political parties registered with the Commission are granted recognition at the State and National levels on the basis of their poll performance at general elections according to criteria specified by it. Political Parties are an important institution and stakeholder in the electoral space as they act as bridge for voters and the contesting candidates in the elections. The Commission has also taken initiatives to streamline political party finances and cleaning up of political space by utilising the available statutory space in the RP Act, 1951. ECI since May 2022 has delisted 284 defaulting and non-compliant Registered Unrecognised Political Parties (RUPPs) and over 253 Registered Unrecognised Political Parties (RUPPs) were declared inactive, thereby barring them from availing benefits of the Symbol Order, 1968. The Commission also introduced an Integrated Election Expenditure Management System (IEMS) for compliance of filing of financial disclosures online.

The quality of the election is indicated by the quality of election campaigning. There has been a special emphasis by the Commission, to address the concern of plummeting level of campaign discourse by navigating through the complex dynamics of keeping a balance between level playing field and freedom of election campaigning.

(12) Assembly Elections in 2023: ECI handled a busy electoral year

As the year 2023 ended, Election Commission of India emerged from its busiest electoral year since the last Parliamentary elections in 2019. It conducted the elections in nine of the States. The aggregate electorate size covered was more than 222 million. It may be considered as the grand rehearsal prior to the 18th Lok Sabha elections of 2024.

(12.1) Northeast State Assembly Elections, 2023

The electoral year began on 18 January 2023 with Election Commission announcing elections in three States viz. Meghalaya, Nagaland and Tripura. Each of them has legislative assembly strength of 60 members. In Meghalaya, 55 seats out of 60, in Nagaland as many as 59 seats out of 60 are reserved for Scheduled Tribe (ST) candidates, which reflects the demographic profile of these States. In Tripura, 20 seats are reserved for ST candidates, 10 are reserved for Scheduled Caste candidates.

All these States have international boundaries. A stronger and wider coordination among law enforcement agencies resulted in improvement in seizures in cash and kind. Right from the preparatory phase, law and order was given priority as much as implementation of model code of conduct.

In Tripura, 100% webcasting was carried out at all Polling Stations for a strict vigil and transparency.

Elections were largely violence free as local newspapers headlines in Tripura proudly flashed as ‘people voted out violence’. With rigorous training and strict monitoring, it was ensured no repoll happen during assembly elections as compared to 168 repolls in 2019 Lok Sabha Elections.

For the first time in Tripura, special efforts were undertaken to enroll voters from Bru Community with consent forms for settlement at a particular location received from about 6,300 Bru families, out of which 5,645 families reported at the settlement sites and about 14,000 adult members were enrolled in the State in 12 locations.



Meghalaya elections



Nagaland elections



Tripura elections

Polling Statistics Overview:

State	Polling Date	No. of Polling Stations	Polling Percentage
Meghalaya	27 February	3,482	86.8%
Nagaland	27 February	2,291	88.1%
Tripura	16 February	3,337	89.8%

[Source : Statistical Reports of GE to SLA, ECI Website]

The counting of votes was held on 2 March, 2024 in all three states. Traditionally, these three States are high voting States, a reputation which they retained in these elections. ECI mounted a steady campaign for making elections inclusive, participatory, ethical and voter friendly with utmost focus on ease of voting. Home voting facility for PwD category and octogenarian electors was exercised by the eligible voters for the first time in these States.

(12.2) Karnataka Election:

The polling was held in the State of Karnataka in single phase on 10 May, and counting was held on 13 May.

Polling Statistics Overview:

State	Polling Date	No. of Polling Stations	Polling Percentage
Karnataka	10 May	58,534	73.8%

[Source: Statistical Reports of GE to SLA, ECI Website]

Voter turnout was 73.8% with enthusiastic participation of voters observed as newlyweds, group of PwDs, transgenders, tribals, etc. participated in the elections. Voting was largely peaceful and no repoll was required. Sustained efforts of monitoring of election expenditure in Karnataka led to seizure of Rs. 385 Crore by different enforcement agencies, which is about 5 times increase from previous elections.

(12.3) Ending 2023 with five State Elections:

Towards the end of the year, elections were held in another five States, as on 9th October, 2023, ECI announced the schedule for elections to the legislative assemblies in Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Mizoram, Rajasthan and Telangana.



Chhattisgarh elections



Madhya Pradesh elections



Madhya Pradesh elections



Mizoram elections



Rajasthan elections



Rajasthan elections



Telangana elections

Voter turnout in State Assembly elections:

State	Poll Date	No. of Polling Stations	Polling Percentage
Chhattisgarh	7 November & 17 November	24,137	76.8%
Mizoram	7 November	1,276	82.3%
Madhya Pradesh	17 November	64,626	77.7%
Rajasthan	25 November	52,139	75.3%
Telangana	30 November	35,655	72.0%

[Source: Statistical Reports of GE to SLA, ECI Website]

A very innovative and massive voter outreach and education programme was launched involving multiple stakeholders and the CEO teams of these States planned meticulously to address voter apathy for identified segments through “Turnout Implementation Plan” by making targeted interventions. Home voting facility for PwD category and octogenarian electors was exercised for the first time in these States. Technological App like C-Vigil, KYC, Suvidha, Saksham, etc. were widely popularized through various means.

(13) ECI Initiatives for General Elections, 2024

Since the first General Elections, the Election Commission of India (ECI) has successfully conducted 18 free, fair and inclusive elections. ECI has continuously undertaken path-breaking initiatives to enhance the voting experience and transparency. In recent years, voter engagement initiatives and electoral reforms resulted in a steady increase in the level of voter participation in the largest democracy of the world. The cumulative learnings from these mammoth exercises, have been crucial towards developing a strategy to ensure no voter is left behind in the upcoming General Elections, 2024.

Each initiative is an endeavour to make the election process more inclusive and robust, and make elections friendly for various stakeholders and enhance electoral participation on day of poll. At the cusp of the General Elections, 2024, ECI strives to make the electoral process even more seamless, voter-friendly, and participative for each and every voter of India.

Following initiatives encapsulate the spirit of democracy, and will prove to be a giant leap towards robust elections in India.

(13.1) Pure and Healthy Electoral Roll

- Pre-registration at 17 years:** Now, 17-year olds can pre-register for voter ID using Form-6, becoming eligible once they turn 18 on specified dates, enhancing voter readiness and democratic engagement.
- Multiple Qualifying Dates:** Young adults turning 18 now have four annual chances—January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1 to register as voters, with quarterly updates to the electoral roll facilitating their inclusion.
- Introduction of New Forms:** New forms have been introduced for multiple updates and corrections, and adjustments have been made for PwD voters and legal guardians.

4. **Appointment of Dedicated AERO:** Dedicated AEROs have been appointed in each Assembly Constituency to boost voter registration among 18–19 year-olds by focusing on educational institutions.

(13.2) Election Management

1. **Consolidation of ECI instructions for ease of reference:** More than 300 instructions on several topics like Law & Order, poll day monitoring, remuneration, honorarium, ex-gratia, counting of votes, etc. have been consolidated into 27 instructions to ensure ease of reference for the election machinery and officials on the ground.
2. **Revision of manuals, handbooks and checklist:** In view of the forthcoming Lok Sabha elections, various important documents issued by the ECI such as the Handbook of Returning Officer, Handbook of Presiding Officer, Handbook for Polling Agent, Handbook for Counting Agent, Manual on Risk Management, Manual on Force Deployment, Manual on Vulnerability Mapping, Manual on District Election Management Plan, SVEEP Manual, various checklists, etc. updated in accordance with latest instructions on each subject matter.
3. **Police Officers' Handbook:** With increasing role of police in the context of elections, there was need to compile their role and responsibilities in the form of a handbook, to act as a guide for the entire police hierarchy in performing their duties pertaining to electoral activities. For the first time, the Handbook for Police Officers was prepared to help the force to streamline their activities and equipping them with tools and strategies to address any issue that arises in the process of conducting elections in their jurisdiction.
4. **Gender Neutral Provision for Service and Special Electors:** The Electoral Laws (Amendment) Act, 2021 ensures gender equality by allowing both spouses of service voters to register as service voters.
5. **Standard Operating Procedure (SoP):** Enforcement Agencies developed SoP to enhance coordination and enforcement to combat money and muscle power in elections, leading to improved results in recently held Assembly elections.
6. **Strict Vigilance at Inter-State Border Checkposts:** ECI is ensuring more emphasis on rigorous checks at Inter-State Border Checkposts to prevent the smuggling of illicit goods and ensure fair elections, with enhanced scrutiny by relevant enforcement agencies.
7. **Identification Of Expenditure Sensitive Constituency (ESCS):** Expenditure Sensitive Constituencies (ESCs) are identified by State CEOs based on past data and sensitivity, with findings reviewed by District Intelligence Committees and monitored by Flying Squads and Static Surveillance Teams to ensure fair elections.
8. **Introduction of a Standardised Disclosure Proforma:** ECI introduced a standardized disclosure proforma for political parties to detail the financial implications and funding sources of their election promises, enhancing transparency and adherence to the Model Code of Conduct.
9. **Advisory On Plummeting Level of Public Discourse:** The Commission, taking serious note of plummeting level of campaign discourse during Karnataka Legislative Assembly elections' 2023

issued advisory to all National and State political parties, contesting candidates to exercise caution and restraint in their utterances during campaigning and not to vitiate the poll atmosphere.

(13.3) Knowledge Sharing: As the electoral management body that conducts the world's largest democratic exercise, ECI is uniquely poised to share learnings and insights with the world through training and capacity building programmes. Following important activities provide a glimpse of initiatives undertaken for the gigantic exercise for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections' 2024.



Conference of CEOs for experience sharing and knowledge transfer: In preparation for the 2024 General Elections, ECI organized a conference with Chief Electoral Officers on January 11-12, 2024, at IIIDEM, New Delhi. The conference focused on experiences from recent State elections and discussed topics like election planning, EVM-VVPAT, electoral roll, expenditure monitoring, IT applications, SVEEP strategy, and media strategy. This event followed regional conferences of CEOs/ SPNOs held in Chandigarh, Chennai, Guwahati, Lucknow and Ahmedabad.

This conference was preceded by two very important Conferences held during 2-4 April, 2023 at LBSNAA, Mussoorie and 19-20 April, 2023 at IIIDEM. Seven groups/ verticals were created covering the whole gamut of activities for pursuing efficient, inclusive and voter friendly elections. Various presentations and interactions based on insights on these subject matters took place in the conferences. A number of action points for each vertical were identified for follow up action at ECI and CEO/ DEO level with utmost seriousness. These conferences proved highly beneficial for the whole election machinery.

The main objectives of the CEO Conference are:

- (i) To initiate preparations for the General Elections to the House of People, 2024;
- (ii) To review the organisational structure of the CEO offices and aligning them with various verticals of election process; and

- (iii) Setting up of a common minimum agenda and goals for each functional vertical of election process.

Training of election machinery: The guiding principle behind India International Institute of Democracy and Election Management (IIIDEM)'s Capacity Building programme is to ensure that all election personnel, across the country, adhere and follow the set procedures, practices, and rules and regulations across all stages of the election process and respond to emergent situations as per well-defined protocols. The exercise commenced in April 2023, with the inventorization of IIIDEM's training components - Target Groups, Training Materials, and Resource Persons (RPs).

- (i) Training Materials – theme based statutory and non-statutory PPTs, audio-visuals, Handbooks, Manuals and circulars, etc.
- (ii) Resource Persons – National Level Master Trainers (NLMTs) and State Level Master Trainers (SLMTs)
- (iii) Target Groups – Officials and Staff under direct mandate of IIIDEM (CEOs, DEOs, ROs/ AROs, EROs/AEROs, Police Nodal Officers and Training Nodal Officers) and request based training of Target Groups that are in the domain of CEO Offices

The inventorization exercise was followed by gap analysis of each of the training components and a framework was developed to bridge the gap and their execution as per timelines.

Over 800 DEOs/ ROs across the country were trained on various thematic areas related to Election Management at IIIDEM, New Delhi and 3,100 EROs from all the States/UTs participated through online training. The Commission took the lead by example especially the Chief Election Commissioner providing insights as well as motivating the DEOs in every single batch of training.

Based on the request by the State CEOs, a training for all 75 DEOs of Uttar Pradesh on ERONet was conducted at IIIDEM between 28 – 30 Nov 2023. Similarly, an Online training on IT Applications was conducted for 96 officers from CEOs Office of Assam on 16 December, 2023. In all, IIIDEM has completed Capacity Building of 23,028 personnel, including 4,732 Resource Persons and 18,296 Polling Personnel for the General Elections to Lok Sabha 2024 and for the four States having simultaneous elections to Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assembly 2024.

International Training Modules for Election Management: IIIDEM in partnership with International Foundation for Electoral System (IFES), has created ten international training modules on election management to share best practices covering topics such as voter education, election administration, and social media. These modules aim to enhance understanding of electoral management, technology, and legal frameworks.

Master's in international Electoral Management and Practices (MIEMP) Programme: ECI through IIIDEM and in collaboration with the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), offers a Master's in international Electoral Management and Practices (MIEMP). This two-year program, spanning four semesters and totaling 80 credits, includes two semesters of online learning and two semesters of blended learning in the second year. The inaugural class for 2022-24 began in December 2022, including participants from ECI, international electoral bodies, and TISS-selected students. The initial two semesters were online, followed by offline classes for the third semester at TISS, Mumbai, and the fourth at IIIDEM, New Delhi.

Inauguration of IIIDEM Hostel Block

On June 6, 2023, ECI inaugurated a hostel block at IIIDEM, Dwarka. This facility supports IIIDEM's mission to train national and international election professionals by providing a conducive learning and living environment.

International Programmes Conducted by IIIDEM (2023)

IIIDEM has hosted international training programmes for 2,701 participants from 138 countries since 2011. Highlights for 2023-24 include is as follows:

IIIDEM International Training Statistics since inception

Programme	No of Programme			No of training days	No of participants			...
	Offline	Online	Total		Offline	Online	Total	91
International	112	17	129	700	2271	430	2701	

The summary of the International Programs conducted in 2023 is as follows:

Delegation Visits:

- Training for 27 Bangladeshi civil servants at PRIDE on July 19, 2023.
- 82 Bangladeshi civil servants visited on August 10, 2023.
- Know India Programme for diaspora youth on August 4 and 18, 2023, with 56 and 58 participants, respectively.

ITEC Programme:

- A 5-day voter registration training from November 20-24, 2023, attended by 9 participants.
- A 2-week basic election administration course from December 18-29, 2023, with 15 participants.

(13.4) Ease of voting for Inclusive and Accessible Elections

- Home Voting:** The Election Commission's home voting facility which is optional & not mandatory, allows absentee voters, including the disabled, octogenarian, essential workers, and COVID-19 affected individuals, to vote from home by applying through Form 12-D, ensuring they can participate without visiting polling stations.
- Inclusive Enrolment:** ECI has undertaken several initiatives to enhance the electoral participation of marginalized groups viz. transgenders, sex workers, women in difficult circumstances, Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs), Homeless and Nomadic Groups.
- Assured Minimum Facilities (AMF) at Polling Stations:** ECI through CEOs of all States/UTs ensures Assured Minimum Facilities (AMF) at polling stations. These included a polling

station on the ground floor, a ramp with an appropriate gradient, drinking water, adequate furniture, proper lighting, signage for voter guidance, toilet facilities, shade, a creche for children, Voter Facilitation Posters, and Voter Assistance Booths.

- (iv) **Other facilities at Polling Stations:** Beyond AMF, polling stations provide medical/ first-aid kits, wheelchairs for PwDs and senior citizens via the Saksham-ECI app, transport for senior citizens and those with disabilities, and separate queues for men, women, senior citizens, and PwDs.
- (v) **Facilitation for Women:** To encourage women's participation, "All-Women Managed Polling Stations" are established, staffed entirely by women, including security personnel. Initiatives such as separate queues for women, priority voting for pregnant women, and targeted interventions have increased female voter turnout.
- (vi) **Advisory For Political Parties for Respectful Discourse for PwDs:** ECI has issued guidelines for political parties to ensure respectful discourse towards Persons with Disabilities (PwDs), prohibiting derogatory or offensive language and requiring internal reviews of campaign materials to prevent ableism and discrimination.
- (vii) **Facilitation for Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) and Senior Citizens:** Polling stations are on the ground floor with sturdy ramps. PwDs and senior citizens are identified and tagged to polling stations for necessary arrangements. Volunteers assist them, and transport facilities are provided. Free public transport passes are offered on polling day where possible.

Additional steps taken include:

- (a) **Postal Ballot Facility:** This facility is implemented for PwDs with benchmark disabilities and senior citizens over 85, allowing them to vote via postal ballot through Form 12D.
- (b) **Accessible Communications:** A two-day workshop was conducted for technological accessibility to improve digital accessibility and content development for PwDs.
- (c) **NACAE Meeting:** National Advisory Committee on Accessible Elections reviewed challenges faced by PwDs and recommended improvements for accessible elections.

(14) Use of IT in election management: ECI has significantly enhanced the use of IT applications to promote citizen participation and ensure transparency in elections. Here's an overview of these applications, focusing on benefits for citizens, political parties, and contestants:

(14.1) Citizen's Perspective: Easing the process of getting enrolled as a voter and participating in the country's democratic process

(14.1.1) Voter Services:

Through (voters.eci.gov.in)(<https://voters.eci.gov.in>) and the Voter Helpline App, citizens can access the electoral roll, apply for voter ID cards, correct voter details, and find polling booth information. Electronically Transmitted Postal Ballot Management System (ETPBMS) allows service voters to receive and submit ballots electronically, integrating with the postal service for free return of ballots.

(14.1.2) Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities:

The Saksham-ECI app enables voters with disabilities to request assistance, such as wheelchairs at polling stations, and manage their voter registration details.

(14.1.3) BLO and Candidate Information:

The BLO App facilitates digital tasks for Booth Level Officers, including house-to-house verification. The Candidate Affidavit Portal and Know Your Candidate (KYC) Mobile App provide access to candidate profiles and their criminal antecedents.

(14.1.4) Grievance Redressal:

National Grievance Service Portal ([NGSP](https://eci-citizenservices.eci.nic.in)) addresses complaints from citizens, political parties, and election officials, ensuring timely resolution and transparency.

(14.1.5) Election Trends TV

Election Trends TV, launched by the ECI, provides real-time election results and trends, with data displayed via auto-scrolling panels outside counting halls and public places, enhancing transparency and accessibility.

(14.2) Political Party & Contestant's Perspective – Ensuring Total Transparency in conducting and monitoring elections**(14.2.1) EVM Management and Monitoring:**

EVM Management System (EMS) ensures transparent allocation of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) through randomized deployment, witnessed by party representatives and observers.

(14.2.2) Reporting and Compliance:

The C-Vigil app allows citizens to report Model Code of Conduct violations during elections, with prompt action taken by authorities. The Voter Turnout App provides real-time approx. voter turnout estimates.

(14.2.3) Nomination and Permissions:

The SUVIDHA portal (suvidha.eci.gov.in) facilitates online submission of nominations and applications for election-related permissions, streamlining processes for contesting candidates and political parties.

(14.2.4) Expenditure Monitoring:

The Integrated Election Expenditure Monitoring System (IEMS) enables political parties to submit financial documents online, improving compliance through features like Aadhaar-based e-Sign and real-time status updates.

(14.2.5) Time Voucher Digitalisation:

The Election Commission has digitized the distribution of air time vouchers, allowing political parties to receive QR-coded vouchers online through the SUVIDHA portal, streamlining and improving the efficiency of the process.

(14.3) Enhanced Security and Management

(14.3.1) ERONet 2.0

This robust infrastructure centralizes election management, providing services like e-EPIC download, NRI registration, and electoral roll updates.

(14.3.2) Observer Portal

An online platform for managing observer activities, including report submissions and notifications from the commission.

(14.3.3) ESMS Portal

Election Seizure Management System (ESMS) Mobile App digitizes data on seized items, enhancing coordination and intelligence sharing among central/ State enforcement agencies to ensure inducement-free elections.

(14.3.4) Security Features

Multiple authentication factors protect the IT systems from breaches, ensuring data integrity and accuracy. These IT advancements by ECI aim to make the electoral process more efficient, transparent, and accessible for all stakeholders.

(15) Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) and Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT)

Following summary captures the key developments and updates related to EVMs and VVPATs in India.

- (a) **Evolution of Voting Systems in India:** Initially, separate ballot boxes with symbols were used in the 1952 and 1957 Lok Sabha elections, raising concerns about tampering. A marking system on ballot papers replaced this in 1960-61 and was used until the 1999 elections.
- (b) **Legal Sanction for EVMs:** Following the Supreme Court's judgment in "A.C. Jose v. Sivan Pillai", 1984, ECI recommended legislative amendments to legalize EVMs. Consequently, Section 61A was added to the Representation of the People Act, 1951, in 1989.

In 1977, ECI explored electronic voting. By 1979, a prototype was developed and demonstrated to political parties. EVMs first appeared in a 1982 Kerala bye-election, but their use was nullified by the Supreme Court due to the lack of legal provisions. The law was amended in December 1988 to include Section 61A, effective from March 15, 1989.

EVMs were used nationwide in the 2004 Lok Sabha elections, replacing paper ballots. Since 2000, EVMs have been used in 148 State Assembly Elections and four General Elections (2004, 2009, 2014, and 2019).

- (c) **Manufacturing:** EVMs are produced by Bharat Electronics Limited and Electronics Corporation of India Limited, under the guidance of the Technical Expert Committee.

(15.1) Procurement of EVMs and VVPATs for the General Election to Lok Sabha, 2024.

- (a) Procurement: For 2024 Lok Sabha elections, ECI procured 10.42 lakh Ballot Units, 6.97 lakh Control Units, and 6.46 lakh VVPATs (as of June 21, 2021), and an additional 2.84 lakh Ballot Units, 2.12 lakh Control Units, and 2.46 lakh VVPATs (as of February 1, 2023)
- (b) Deployment in 2023 Elections: EVMs and VVPATs were deployed in all the polling stations of various State Legislative Assembly elections in 2023 as following: -

S. No.	Name of State	Total Polling Stations
1	Chhattisgarh	24,137
2	Karnataka	58,534
3	Madhya Pradesh	64,626
4	Meghalaya	3,482
5	Mizoram	1,276
6	Nagaland	2,291
7	Rajasthan	52,139
8	Telangana	35,655
9	Tripura	3,337

[Source: Statistical Reports of GE to SLA, ECI Website]

(15.2) Milestones of EVMs: In 2004, EVMs were used for all 543 PCs in the Lok Sabha elections. Technological upgrades to EVMs occurred in 2001, in 2006 and again in 2013-14. EVMs manufactured before 2006 are referred to as 'M1 EVMs,' while those made between 2006 and 2010 are called 'M2 EVMs.' The latest 'M3 EVMs,' produced since 2013, incorporate the Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) to enhance more transparency and verifiability. VVPATs were first used in the 2013 by-election for the 51-Noksen Assembly Constituency in Nagaland and in all polling stations throughout the country during General Elections to Lok Sabha 2019.

(15.3) Technical Features of EVMs and VVPATs**(a) EVMs:**

- Stand-alone operation: No wired or wireless connections to prevent external access.
- One-Time Programmable (OTP) Chip: Ensures security and integrity.
- Dynamic and Encrypted Signal Coding: Enhances communication security among units.
- Unauthorized Access Detection Module (UADM): Prevents tampering attempts.
- Real-Time Clock: Provides event time-stamping.
- Mutual Authentication: Verifies units within the system.
- Internal Power Supply: Operates independently from external power sources.

(b) VVPATs:

- **Visual Confirmation:** Displays a paper slip for 7 seconds for voter verification.
- **Inbuilt Security Features:** Similar to those in EVMs.
- **Internal Power Supply:** Operates without external power.
- **Contrast and Length Sensors:** Maintains print quality and monitors paper slip length.
- **Depletion and Fall Sensors:** Warns of low paper and ensures timely slip cutting.

Additionally, ECI has introduced water and shock-proof ergonomically efficient backpacks for EVM-VVPAT machines and polling materials, improving safety and mobility for polling parties in challenging terrains.

(16) Engaging Voters through voter education and awareness for General Elections, 2024:

Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) is ECI's flagship programme designed to inform, motivate, facilitate, educate, engage, and empower voters for informed and ethical electoral participation. Following initiatives have been taken in the year 2023-24, to engage with a wider audience for the General Election 2024:

1. **ECI Song 'Main Bharat Hoon, Hum Bharat Ke Matdata Hain':** This song released on the 13th National Voters Day in 2023, and sung by forty leading singers, celebrates Indian democracy's strength and diversity through voter participation. It is available in Hindi and multilingual versions on the YouTube channels.
2. **National Icons:** Cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar and actor Rajkummar Rao have been appointed as National Icons to enhance voter awareness and participation, especially targeting the youth.
3. **National Level SSR-2024 Launch Desh Ka Form:** A national awareness campaign, "Desh Ka Form," was launched to promote enrolment and remove duplicate entries in the electoral roll. It ran from November 30 to December 9, 2023.
4. **Chacha Chowdhury Comic Book:** "Chacha Chaudhary aur Chunavi Dangal" is a comic book using popular characters to encourage young voters to participate in elections.
5. **MoU with Ministry of Education:** An MoU signed with the Ministry of Education aims to incorporate electoral literacy into school and college curricula, fostering responsible citizenship and electoral participation.
6. **Turnout Implementation Plan:** ECI's Turnout Implementation Plan (TIP) targets increased voter participation by focusing on specific Assembly Constituencies with low turnout and encouraging higher engagement nationwide.
7. **Democracy Rooms:** All CEOs have been asked to establish 'Democracy Rooms' in senior secondary schools to foster civic education and voter awareness among students through year-round SVEEP activities and resources.

8. **Matdata Junction:** The Election Commission's Matdata Junction, a year-long radio series launched on October 7, 2022, broadcasts across 230 AIR channels in 23 languages to boost voter awareness and combat apathy, with a new version, Matdata Junction 2.0, planned for the 2024 General Elections.
9. **Blo e-Patrika:** TheBLO e-Patrika is a digital periodical that enhances communication with Booth Level Officers (BLOs) by sharing updates, challenges, and success stories, and is distributed via WhatsApp and the BLO App in local languages.
10. **ECI is now on WhatsApp!** ECI is now on WhatsApp to provide accurate updates and information, leveraging the platform for extensive outreach and encouraging BLOs to use it for voter communication.
11. **Pocket Voter Guide:** ECI's pocket-sized Voter Guide provides essential election information, including contact details, polling station locations, and identification requirements, making it easy for voters to access key details.

(17) International engagements of ECI during 2023

- (i) **ECI hosted the 2nd International Conference on 'Use of Technology and Elections Integrity' as the lead for the Cohort on 'Election Integrity' during 23 - 24 January, 2023 at New Delhi,** ECI hosted two significant international Conferences as part of its leadership role in the Cohort on Election Integrity, which followed the 'Summit for Democracy' held in December 2021.



2nd International Conference on 'Use of Technology and Elections Integrity': Held during January 23-24, 2023, at New Delhi, this conference was the second in a series of three conferences organized by ECI. It was inaugurated by Chief Election Commissioner Shri Rajiv Kumar and the then Election Commissioners Shri Anup Chandra Pandey and Shri Arun Goel. The Conference focused on the impact of new media, particularly social media, on Election Management Bodies (EMBs). Participants included delegates from 16 countries, including heads or deputy heads of nine EMBs, as well as representatives from International IDEA and IFES, and diplomats from eight foreign missions in New Delhi.

- (ii) **ECI hosted the 3rd International Conference in virtual mode on ‘Inclusive Elections and Elections Integrity’ as the lead for the Cohort on ‘Election Integrity’ on 9th March, 2023 in Bangalore.**

3rd International Conference on ‘Inclusive Elections and Elections Integrity’: Conducted virtually on March 9, 2023, from Bangalore, this Conference was part of the Cohort’s efforts to enhance election integrity. It followed the first Conference held on October 31 - November 1, 2022, in New Delhi, which focused on the role and capacity of EMBs and included nearly 50 representatives from 11 countries. 3rd conference continued discussions on ensuring inclusivity and integrity in elections, furthering international collaboration and best practices in election management.



- (iii) **Commission’s International Visits and MoUs**

- **Kazakhstan:** Shri Arun Goel, the then Election Commissioner, visited Kazakhstan as an international observer for the elections of deputies of the Mazhilis and Maslikhats on March 19, 2023.
- **Bhutan:** Shri Rajiv Kumar, CEC, visited for bilateral discussions with the Election Commission of Bhutan and interacted with the NRI community and embassy officials about voter enrollment and ETPBS.



- **Netherlands:** Shri Rajiv Kumar, CEC, interacted with the NRI community and embassy officials in the Hague on July 13, 2023.



- **Costa Rica:** An ECI delegation led by Shri Rajiv Kumar, CEC, visited San Jose for bilateral meetings with Costa Rica's Supreme Electoral Court (TSE) during July 7-8, 2023.



- **Colombia:** The delegation led by the CEC participated in the 11th Executive Board meeting of A-WEB on July 12, 2023.





- **Uzbekistan:** Shri Anup Chandra Pandey, the then EC, participated as an international observer during the early Presidential Elections on July 9, 2023.



- **Brazil:** Shri Arun Goel, the then EC, attended an event on “Preserving Information Integrity and Public Trust in Elections” from August 14-15, 2023.
- **Maldives:** Shri Arun Goel, the then EC, observed the Presidential Elections on September 9, 2023.
- **Mauritius:** Shri Rajiv Kumar, CEC led delegation visited Mauritius to strengthen collaboration between ECI and EC-Mauritius.



- **Republic of Korea:** Shri Anup Chandra Pandey, EC and Shri Dharmendra Sharma, Sr DEC attended an international Conference on A-WEB’s 10th Anniversary and interacted with embassy officials and NRI representatives on October 12, 2023.



MoU

- **Seychelles:** Shri Rajiv Kumar, CEC signed an MoU on Electoral Cooperation with Mr. Danny Lucas, Chairman of the Electoral Commission of Seychelles, on September 26, 2023.
- **Panama:** An MoU on Electoral Cooperation was signed with Panama by Shri Rajiv Kumar, CEC and Mr. Alfredo Junca Wendehak, President, during a visit on July 5-6, 2023.

5. LEGISLATIVE III SECTION

(1) LEGISLATION IN CONCURRENT LIST

As per the Government of India (Allocation of Business) Rules, 1961, the following subjects which fall under List III - Concurrent List of the Seventh Schedule to the Constitution have been allocated to this Department as regards legislation only: –

- (a) marriage and divorce, infants and minors, adoption, wills, intestate and succession, joint family and partition;
- (a) transfer of property other than agricultural land (excluding benami transactions, registration of deeds and documents);
- (b) contracts, but not including those relating to agricultural land;
- (c) actionable wrongs;
- (d) trusts and trustees, administrators - General and Official Trustees;
- (e) evidence and oaths;
- (f) civil procedure including limitation and arbitration;
- (h) charitable and religious endowments and religious institutions.

(2) REPORTS OF THE LAW COMMISSION OF INDIA

Reports of the Law Commission of India (LCI) on certain subjects mentioned in List III-Concurrent List of the Seventh Schedule to the Constitution, with which this Department is concerned are being examined and proposed for Legislation/Amendment after consultation with the concerned Ministries/Departments of Central Government, State Governments/ Union territories are accordingly mooted.

(3) JOINT PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE ON OFFICES OF PROFIT

The Joint Committee on Offices of Profit (JCOP), which is constituted during the tenure of each Lok Sabha (since the Second Lok Sabha), undertakes the work of continuous scrutiny in respect of nature, character and composition of Offices of Profit, statutory and non-statutory bodies under the Government of India or any State Government with a view to recommend to the Government of India for amending the Schedule to the Parliament (Prevention of Disqualification) Act, 1959. The Legislative Department examines references for the Secretariat of JCOP as to whether certain offices come within the premises of “Office of Profit”. During the period from 1st January, 2023, to 31st March, 2024, we examined 2 such references and tendered evidence before JCOP in such matters based on which JCOP finalised their reports.

(4) PETITIONS AND OTHER COURT CASES RELATING TO PERSONAL LAWS AND OTHER SUBJECTS

The Legislative Department, being in-charge of personal laws (as regards legislation) and matters relating to List III- Concurrent List of the Seventh Schedule to the Constitution, such as, the Contract Act, 1872, the Evidence Act, 1872, the Indian Trust Act, 1882, the Transfer of Property Act, 1882, the Partition Act, 1893, the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908, the Limitation Act, 1963, the Parliament (Prevention of Disqualification) Act, 1959 etc.; and handled various petitions and other court cases in the Supreme Court and various High Courts. During the period from 1st January, 2023, to 31st March, 2024, 62 fresh cases have been received. Parawise comments, counter affidavits and appropriate instructions, as the case may be, have been prepared and conveyed to the Government Counsel.

(5) STATE LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS

Legislative proposals enacted by the State Legislatures relating to the subjects allocated to this Department which require assent of the President by virtue of the provisions of clause (2) of article 254 of the Constitution, are scrutinised in the Department.

During the period from 1st January, 2023 to 31st March, 2024, fifty seven references relating to State Bills/ Ordinances have been scrutinised.

6. INSTITUTE OF LEGISLATIVE DRAFTING AND REASEARCH (ILDR)

The Institute of Legislative Drafting and Research (ILDR) was setup in January, 1989 under the aegis of the Legislative Department, Ministry of Law and Justice, Government of India to scale up the capabilities and availability of trained Legislative Counsel to deal with legislative proposals. Since its inception, ILDR has been imparting theoretical, clinical, practical knowledge as well as offsite training in Legislative Drafting and Research to officers of Central Government Departments, State Government/Union territory Administrations, public institutions and government bodies.

The Institute of Legislative Drafting and Research has been awarded Certificate of Registration for their Quality Management System that complies to the requirement of the standard ISO 9001:2015.

ILDR Course Initiatives/functions:

A. Training programme and Capacity Building:

- (i) **Appreciation Course:** - The Appreciation Course in Legislative Drafting is of fifteen days duration for middle level officers of Central Government Ministries/Departments/Attached/Subordinate Offices and Central Public Sector Undertakings. So far 25 Appreciation Courses in Legislative Drafting have been completed and 444 officers of different Ministries/Departments have been benefitted.

24th Appreciation Course was held from 21.02.2023 to 07.03.2023 wherein 20 officers attended the said programme. Whereas, 25th Appreciation Course was conducted from 12.02.2024 to 23.02.2024, wherein 38 officers attended the programme.

- (ii) **Basic Course:** - The Basic Course in Legislative Drafting is of three months duration and meant for the middle level officers of the State Governments/Union territory Administrations. So far 33 Basic Courses in Legislative Drafting have been completed and 418 officers of different State Governments/Union territory Administrations have been benefitted.

33rd Basic Course was held from 03.07.2023 to 27.09.2023 wherein 11 officers attended the said programme.

- (iii) **Structured Course:** - A course on Legislative Drafting is structured specifically for officers on request from Central Government Departments, State Government/Union territory Administrations, Public Institutions and Government bodies. The venue, duration, faculty and course module for such structured course is drawn up and finalised separately on each such Course.

Lectures were delivered by Dr. Manoj Kumar, Additional Secretary and Shri Diwakar Singh, the then Joint Secretary & Legislative Counsel at Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration, Mussoorie on 19th March, 2024.

Dr. K.V. Kumar, Additional Legislative Counsel and Smt. Akali V. Konghay, Additional Legislative Counsel imparted 3 days training programme from 19.03.2024 to 21.03.2024 on 'Legislative Drafting' at Thiruvananthapuram for the officers of Government of Kerala.

- (iv) **Lecture, Workshop or Training Session:** - A Lecture, Workshop or Training Session on Legislative Drafting is structured specifically for officers on request from Central Government Departments, State Government/Union territory Administrations, Public Institutions and Government bodies. The venue, duration, faculty and topic for a Lecture, Workshop or Training Session is drawn up and finalised separately on each such Session. ILDR may undertake a Lecture, Workshop or Training Session alongwith any other institution or law schools.

- (v) **Conference, Seminars and Webinars for Legislative Department:-** ILDR conceives and executes conferences, seminars and webinars on various topics for the Legislative Department

alongwith the concerned section(s) and administrative support teams of the Legislative Department, Ministry of Law & Justice of the Government of India. The venue, duration, resource persons and topic for each conference, seminar or webinar is drawn up and finalised separately on each such conferences, seminars and webinars.

B. Internship/Fellowships & Research Initiatives:

- (i) Internship/Fellowship: - The ILDR offers Internship/Fellowship to deserving candidates to motivate, create interest in legislative drafting skills and secure knowledge about the nature and working of the Legislative Department. ILDR selects candidates for internships/fellowships on need based basis. The candidates selected for Internship/Fellowship shall not be entitled for any remuneration and will be subject to code of conduct and confidentiality of Legislative Department.

So far 437 students from different law colleges have been benefitted by the Internship Scheme.

- (ii) Research Initiatives: - ILDR undertakes Research Initiatives for Central Government Departments, State Government/Union territory Administrations, public institutions and government bodies. For this purpose, ILDR also undertakes Research Initiative alongwith any other institution or law schools on need based basis in the areas of:
- a) socio legal study and field research;
 - b) publication of papers, journals and research reports;
 - c) application of laws in the various phases of social economic and political life;
 - d) methods and methodology of research in the context of legal science, legal system and law reforms;
 - e) creating resource pools, research labs and sharing of resources on a need to need basis.

C. Legal literacy and awareness initiatives :

ILDR supports and undertakes Legal awareness initiatives alongwith institutions, bar associations and law schools including workshops, symposiums, lecture series, nukkad natak's, stage play, training programs, workshops, seminars, community halts and other social services initiatives, etc.

(6.1) E- GOVERNANCE INITIATIVES

Secure, Scalable and Sugamya (Accessible) website:

The Legislative Department has launched its official website which is powered by S3WaaS, a cloud service developed for Government entities to generate Secure, Scalable and Sugamya (Accessible) websites. The Standardisation Testing and Quality Certification Directorate, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology has verified and provided Website Quality Certificate, certifying that this Department's website fulfils the Website Quality Certification Scheme Quality Level 1. The said website is Guidelines for Indian Government Websites (GIGW) compliant, visually impaired friendly and would enable users to easily navigate and search for the content they are looking for.

Implementation of e-Office Lite:

Implementation of e-Office(Lite), as part of good governance and being an important Mission Mode Projects of the Government, has been made operational in the Legislative Department in coordination with the National Informatics Centre (NIC).

Cyber Security Instructions to thwart any possible cyber attack in the Legislative Department:

Compliance of E-Governance Policy under Information Technology in coordination with National Informatics Centre to counter cyber threats are done periodically. The Cyber Security Instructions as provided by the Government from time to time to sensitize the officers and staff of the Legislative Department on the continuing threat of data pilferage, hacking and similar cyber attacks by non-State entities have also been circulated for strict adherence in order to thwart any possible cyber attack and secure the Department's website as well as any data pilferage.

7. RIGHT TO INFORMATION (RTI) APPLICATIONS

Consequent upon the enactment of the Right to Information Act, 2005 (22 of 2005), the Legislative Department constituted a Right to Information Cell with effect from the 12th August, 2005 with one Appellate Officer, one Central Public Information Officer and one Central Assistant Public Information Officer. At present Shri Udaya Kumara, Additional Secretary, Shri P.C. Meena, Director and Shri Navneet Kumar, Section Officer are functioning as the Appellate Authority, Central Public Information Officer and the Central Assistant Public Information Officer respectively. This Department has launched a separate webpage under the caption "Right to Information" on the Department's official website and maximum information pertaining to this Department have been disseminated therein in consonance with the provisions of the Right to Information Act, 2005 so as to ensure the object of proactive disclosure of information envisaged under the said Act. Further, contact E-mail addresses have been created in coordination with the NIC Cell for Appellate Authority and Central Public Information Officer of this Department, so as to make this Department's official website more user friendly for the public to utilize the provisions of the said Act. The contact e-mail address of the Appellate Authority is aa-rti-legis@nic.in and that of the Central Public Information Officer is cpio-rti-legis@nic.in.

Keeping in view, the various provisions of RTI Act, 2005, the applications received from the applicants are thoroughly examined and the available information collected from the concerned administrative units of the Legislative Department is provided to the applicants. Also, the applications which contain the subject matter pertaining to other Ministries/Departments of the center Government are promptly transferred to the concerned Ministries/Departments in the center consonance with the relevant provision of the said Act. Further, in case of First appeals, the same are independently examined by the Appellate Authority and disposed of within the prescribed time limit. During the year (1st January, 2023 to 31st March, 2024) One thousand six hundred and six (1606) applications seeking information under the said Act were received, which were promptly attended as per the provisions of the Right to Information Act, 2005 and the rules made thereunder. Eighty-five (85) first appeals were preferred before the Appellate Authority out of which 58 (fifty-eight) cases were duly disposed off on merits during the period of 1st January, 2023 to 31st March, 2024.

8. CORRECTION SECTION AND INDIA CODE UPDATION UNIT

MAINTENANCE OF CENTRAL AND STATE ACTS

The Correction Section is responsible for maintenance and updation of the Central legislations, Orders issued under the Constitution of India, Central Ordinances, Regulations promulgated by the President's under article 240 of the Constitution, Acts and compilation of State Acts for the use of officers in the Ministry of Law and Justice. This Section maintains master copies of the India Code, which contains unrepealed Central Acts and acts as a reference for the Minister-in-charge, officers in the Ministry of Law and Justice (Legislative Department and Department of Legal Affairs) and the Law Officers of the Government of India. These are valuable reference books and are also used for publishing the revised editions of Acts by the Central Government. The work of updating of Central Acts is an ongoing process and the enforced Central Acts of year 2024 have been updated in the master copy of the India Code. A List of Central Acts, arranged both alphabetically and chronologically, has also been updated on the official website of the Legislative Department at www.legislative.gov.in under the heading "Documents", after each Session of Parliament.

In the year 2023-2024, this Section has downloaded Gazette copies of sixty-three Acts of Parliament (including Two Finance Acts and ten Appropriation Acts), one Constitution Amendment Act, namely the Constitution (One Hundred and Sixth Amendment) Act, 2023 and one Central Ordinance and four Regulations from the official website of the Directorate of Printing, Department of Publication at <http://www.egazette.nic.in>. This Section has prepared a folder of Central Acts passed by the Parliament in the year 2023-2024 and incorporated amendments of 28 amending Acts in the master copies of the principal Acts. The details of Acts, Ordinances and Regulations downloaded are as follows:

Central Acts:

A. Principal Acts downloaded in the year 2023 (excluding Appropriation Acts and Finance Act):

1. The Maritime Anti-Piracy Act, 2022 (3 of 2023)
2. The National Dental Commission Act, 2023 (21 of 2023)
3. The Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 (22 of 2023)
4. The Anusandhan National Research Foundation Act, 2023 (25 of 2023)
5. The National Nursing and Midwifery Commission Act, 2023 (26 of 2023)
6. The Inter-Services Organisations (Command, Control and Discipline) Act, 2023 (28 of 2023)
7. The Mediation Act, 2023 (32 of 2023)
8. The Repealing and Amending Act, 2023 (37 of 2023)
9. The Post Office Act, 2023 (43 of 2023)
10. The Telecommunications Act, 2023 (44 of 2023)
11. The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 (45 of 2023)

12. The Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 (46 of 2023)
13. The Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023 (47 of 2023)
14. The Provisional Collection of Taxes Act, 2023 (50 of 2023)
15. The Press and Registration of Periodicals Act, 2023 (51 of 2023)

*The Constitution (One Hundred and Sixth Amendment) Act, 2023.

B. Amendment Acts downloaded in the year 2023:

1. *The Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order (Second Amendment) Act, 2022 (1 of 2023)*
2. *The Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order (Fourth Amendment) Act, 2022 (2 of 2023)*
3. *The Competition (Amendment) Act, 2023 (9 of 2023)*
4. *The Biological Diversity (Amendment) Act, 2023 (10 of 2023)*
5. *The Multi-State Co-operative Societies (Amendment) Act, 2023 (11 of 2023)*
6. *The Cinematograph (Amendment) Act, 2023 (12 of 2023)*
7. *The Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Orders (Amendment) Act, 2023 (13 of 2023)*
8. *The Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Orders (Second Amendment) Act, 2023 (14 of 2023)*
9. *The Forest (Conservation) Amendment Act, 2023 (15 of 2023)*
10. *The Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2023 (16 of 2023)*
11. *The Offshore Areas Mineral (Development and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2023 (17 of 2023)*
12. *The Jan Vishwas (Amendment and Provisions) Act, 2023 (18 of 2023)*
13. *The Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Act, 2023 (19 of 2023)*
14. *The Registration of Births and Deaths (Amendment) Act, 2023 (20 of 2023)*
15. *The Indian Institutes of Management (Amendment) Act, 2023 (23 of 2023)*
16. *The Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Orders (Amendment) Act, 2023 (24 of 2023)*
17. *The Coastal Aquaculture Authority (Amendment) Act, 2023 (27 of 2023)*
18. *The Pharmacy (Amendment) Act, 2023 (29 of 2023)*
19. *The Central Goods and Services Tax (Amendment) Act, 2023 (30 of 2023)*
20. *The Integrated Goods and Services Tax (Amendment) Act, 2023 (31 of 2023)*
21. *The Advocates (Amendment) Act, 2023 (33 of 2023)*

22. *The Jammu and Kashmir Reservation (Amendment) Act, 2023 (34 of 2023)*
23. *The Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Amendment) Act, 2023 (35 of 2023)*
24. *The Central Universities (Amendment) Act, 2023 (36 of 2023)*
25. The Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Second Amendment) Act, 2023 (38 of 2023)
26. The Government of Union Territories (Amendment) Act, 2023 (39 of 2023)
27. The National Capital Territory of Delhi Laws (Special Provisions) Second Amendment Act, 2023 (42 of 2023)
28. The Central Goods and Services Tax (Second Amendment) Act, 2023 (48 of 2023)

Ordinance downloaded in the year 2023:

1. The Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Ordinance, 2023 (1 of 2023)

Regulations downloaded in year 2023:

1. The Laccadive, Minicoy and Amindivi Island Revenue and Tenancy (Amendment) Regulation, 2023 (1 of 2023)
2. The Andaman and Nicobar Islands Tenancy Regulation, 2023(2 of 2023)
3. The Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu Tenancy Regulation, 2023(3 of 2023)
4. The Lakshadweep Tenancy Regulation, 2023(4 of 2023)

A. Principal Acts downloaded in the year 2024 (excluding Appropriation Acts and Finance Act):

1. The Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024 (1 of 2024)

B. Amendment Acts downloaded in the year 2024:

1. The Jammu and Kashmir Local Bodies Laws (Amendment) Act, 2024 (2 of 2024)
2. The Constitution (Jammu and Kashmir) Scheduled Tribes Order (Amendment) Act, 2024 (3 of 2024)
3. The Constitution (Jammu and Kashmir) Scheduled Castes Order (Amendment) Act, 2024(4 of 2024)
4. The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Amendment Act, 2024 (5 of 2024)
5. The Constitution (Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes) Order (Amendment) Act, 2024 (6 of 2024)
6. The Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order (Amendment) Act, 2024 (7 of 2024)

Consequent to publication of the Gazette notification of the enforcement of the amending Acts of Parliament, the amendments have been carried out in the master copies of 28 principal Acts. During the year 2023-

2024, the Acts which have been brought into force by the respective administrative Ministries, the date of enforcement and their notification numbers have been entered at the relevant places of master copies of the Acts.

State Acts:

During the year 2023-2024, this Section has received a total of 60 State Acts from 7 States, namely Andhra Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal, and 5 Ordinances from 2 States, namely Himachal Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. All State Acts and Ordinances have been kept in folders and entries made in the registers.

India Code Updation Unit

Each year number of legislations (both principal Acts and amending Acts) are passed by the legislature and it is difficult for judges, lawyers as well as citizens to refer relevant and up-to-date Acts when required. This can be solved by building up an exclusive repository of all the Acts and amendments in one place which is open to all. A need has been felt for the development of building up Central repository of all the Acts and their subordinate legislations (made from time to time) at one place which are easily accessible to all stakeholders with a view to make such laws available in up-to-date form when required by public, lawyers, judges, etc., and to avoid private publishers from exploiting the general public with enormous prices by claiming published updated laws as their copyrighted work. In fact, this is the most vital reason why India Code has been made available over Internet. Keeping all these aspects in view, India Code Information System (ICIS), a one stop digital repository of all the Central and State Legislations

including their respective subordinate legislations has been developed with the help of NIC under the guidance of Ministry of Law and Justice (Legislative Department). It is an important step in ensuring legal empowerment of all citizens as well as realising the objective of **ONE NATION –ONE PLATFORM**.

SALIENT FEATURES:

The main object of this System is to provide a one stop repository of all the Acts and Legislations in India in the latest and updated format as and when required by the general public, lawyers, judges and all other interested parties. With the help of this System, not only the procedures of locating the relevant precedents and amendments has been highly simplified but retrieval of any Central or State Act of one's interest in an up-to-date form has been made user-friendly and accessible. A mobile application has also been developed through which such information is accessible on mobile from anywhere. This System has promoted public knowledge on all laws made in India and has helped as effective information management to support the work of the administrative authorities and provision of ready access to it by the public in digital form.

This repository consists of all the Central Acts (existing and repealed) and State Acts. It is a central database repository which contains all laws made in India. As and when any new Acts, amendments to existing Acts are passed by Parliament and State Legislative Assembly and subordinate legislations are made, respective authority has been provided with the facility to upload on central repository.

Under ICIS, indiacode.nic.in website has been developed which consists of all Central as well as State Acts along with their Subordinate Legislations. All Central Acts and State Acts are providing the details relating to Sections, Schedules, Short titles, Enactment Dates and also very significant Foot-Notes in every Act.

Search facility has been made available on the following fields:

1. Act Year
2. Act Number
3. Enactment Date
4. Short Title
5. Ministry
6. Department

A free “Text Search” is also available.

MAJOR e-GOVERNANCE INITIATIVES

As an ongoing process of updating and uploading of Central Acts on the India Code website, 885 Central Acts have been updated and uploaded; 8 spent Acts and 4058 repealed Acts were also uploaded. On the directions of the Hon’ble High Court of Delhi, the Hindi version of 654 Central Acts have been updated and uploaded on the portal. The Registration of Electors Rules, 1960 and the Conduct of Election Rules, 1961 of The Manual of Election Laws Vol-II have been updated and uploaded on the portal. The State amendments in the Central Acts have also been updated and uploaded on the portal. As far as updating and uploading of subordinate legislations are concerned, all the administrative Ministries and Departments in the Government of India have been requested to make available the updated versions and many Ministries/Departments have completed the uploading of their subordinate legislations.

The ICIS is a major e-Governance initiative containing all existing Central and State Acts of country having largest democracy at one place. Therefore, available Acts are referred nationally as well as internationally by Law makers, Judiciary, Academicians, Law Students, etc. Thus, web portal is accessed globally. The ICIS prevents the monopoly of private publishers who may claim copyrights of their publication.

10. PRINTING SECTION

The Printing Sections of the Legislative Department, namely, Printing I and Printing II, undertake the processing of legislation for printing at various stages. These two Sections handle the work relating to the editing of manuscripts of the Bills [including preparation of Arrangement of Clauses (A.O.C) and Annexures, wherever required], Ordinances, Regulations, Adaptation Orders, Orders issued under the Constitution of India, Delimitation Orders and other statutory instruments before sending them to Press. The Printing Sections check the proofs of the Bills, etc., at multiple stages and after approval, the same are sent to the Legislative I Section, which forwards them to Lok Sabha/Rajya Sabha Secretariat for printing of ‘To be introduced in Lok Sabha/Rajya Sabha’ stage copies. The Bills, which are required to be introduced at a short notice are also got printed by the Printing Sections on behalf of the Lok Sabha/Rajya Sabha Secretariat. Subsequently, the printed copies of the Bills are examined at various stages, namely, ‘To be introduced’ stage, ‘As passed by the Lok Sabha/Rajya Sabha’ stage, ‘As passed by the Houses of Parliament’ stage, ‘Assent copy’ stage, ‘Signature copy’ stage and at last, after assent of the President, the Act is prepared and processed for publication in the Official Gazette. Immediately, after the publication of the Act in the Gazette of India, Printing Sections scrutinise the Act and publish corrigenda, if required.

2. Besides the aforesaid works, Printing Sections also perform the work relating to proof reading of the Constitution of India and vetting of the other Central Acts with the updated official records for uploading on India Code website and other publication purposes.
3. New process of preparing Camera Ready Copy (CRC) of all Government Bills by Printing Section has been implemented in this Department since Budget Session-2024 of Parliament. In this, Printing Sections had to prepare the draft Government Bills as provided by draftsman into a final standardized and ready to print format. Earlier, CRC of Government Bills were used to be prepared by Government of India Press (Minto Road) at every stage of Parliamentary Legislative process. After thorough research and training, Printing Sections have successfully implemented the process which reduced the steps of getting the proofs of Bills printed multiple times which results into less paper usage, less movement and handling of Bills between Press and Printing Sections diminishing chances of error, providing more time for scrutiny and proof reading of Bill in section itself, and enabling this Department of more efficient use of human and machine resources.
4. During the period from 1st January, 2023 to 31st March, 2024 the Printing I and Printing II Sections have performed the following tasks, namely: —
 - (a) edited manuscripts, checked the proofs and scrutinized copies of 104 Bills, 1 Ordinance and 4 Presidential Regulations, and published 64 Acts, 1 Ordinance and 4 Presidential Regulations in the Gazette of India;
 - (b) vetted of 109 Acts consisting of 2253 pages with official records for uploading on the India Code website and 39 Acts consisting of 1996 pages for other publication purposes; and
 - (c) prepared CRC copies for 49 Government Bills and processed for onward transmission to Parliament.

11. GENERAL STATUTORY RULES AND ORDERS (GSRO) SECTION

- (1) G.S.R.O Section is a reference Section which maintains rules, regulations, orders etc. made under the Acts enacted by the Parliament and also uploaded on the website of India Code portal. The subordinate legislations, namely, general statutory rules, regulations, orders, notifications etc. under an enactment is prepared and issued by the Ministry or Department which is administratively concerned with the respective Act, after getting them approved and vetted by the Legislative Department. Pursuant to the recommendations of the Parliamentary Committee on Subordinate Legislation, the administrative Ministries are required to upload all statutory rules, regulations, orders, notifications etc. framed by them in their website and India Code portal and update the status on e-Samiksha Portal.
- (2) Further, this Section has been collecting and compiling reports on rules, regulations, statutes and ordinances framed under the Acts of Parliament from the administering Ministries/Departments for the Acts administered by them and submitting a Quarterly Report to the Cabinet Secretariat.
- (3) This Section provides information on Gazette notifications to all the officers of this Department as well as other Departments/Ministries, as and when necessary. Also, the Section has been maintaining registers with data relating to Part-II, Section 3, Sub-sections (i) and (ii) of various Ordinary and Extraordinary Gazette notifications.
- (4) Apart from dealing with various receipts pertaining to Parliament Questions and related Reports,

this Section has also been dealing with correspondences on fulfilment of Parliament Assurances such as seeking necessary inputs/requisite information from various Ministries/Departments of the Government of India, compiling Reports based on available information, seeking extension of time from Committee on Government Assurances of Lok Sabha/Rajya Sabha Secretariat towards fulfilment of these Assurances and submission of Implementation Report thereof. Also, timely monitoring of the OAMS (Online Assurance Monitoring System) portal regarding transfer of Assurances and CPGRAMS portal is undertaken.

12. INTEGRATED FINANCE AND BUDGET AND ACCOUNTS SECTION (IFD)

The Integrated Finance and Budget & Accounts Section is responsible for the work relating to preparation of Budget Estimates and Revised Estimates for all the three Departments of the Ministry of Law and Justice, namely, Department of Legal Affairs, Legislative Department and Department of Justice. Further, the work relating to finalisation of Budget, Pre-Budget Discussion and seeking supplementary/ additional funds are also looked after by this Section. The preparation of the Detailed Demands for Grants of the whole Ministry and compiling of Demands for Grants in respect of Election Commission of India and Supreme Court of India, is also done by Budget & Accounts Section. Apart from this, the Section is also dealing with the proposals which involve financial implications for concurrence of Financial Advisor and wherever specific opinion is required to be taken from the Ministry of Finance, the same is also processed before forwarding to Ministry of Finance. The work relating to Parliamentary Standing Committee on Demands for Grants for the Ministry of Law and Justice is also co-ordinated by this Section.

(2) IF and B&A Section is also responsible for the work relating to release of funds to the States/Union territories (having Legislatures) on account of Election related expenditure.

13. PUBLICATION SECTION

Publication Section brings out, from time-to-time, latest editions of the Central Acts and other important publications like Constitution of India, Manual of Election Law, Orders issued under the Constitution of India, Index to Statutory Definitions and Annual Volume of the Acts of Parliament, etc. for dissemination of general public.

(2) During the year 2023-2024, the Publications Section compiled and scrutinized the Constitution of India (English version) incorporating the latest amendments including the Constitution (One Hundred and Sixth Amendment) Act, 2023, along with the footnotes. The updated version has been made available on the official website <https://legislative.gov.in/constitution-of-india/> of this Department. Further, the manuscript for the latest edition 2024 of the Constitution of India was prepared and forwarded to the Official Language Wing for publication in diglot edition (English and Hindi).

(3) The latest edition of the Manual of Election Law, 2024 duly incorporating the latest amendments was published in diglot form by this Department in March, 2024.

(4) The Publications Section prepares the manuscripts (English version) of the Central Acts duly incorporating the latest amendments which are then forwarded to the Official Language Wing for publication in bilingual version. During the year 2023-2024, manuscripts of the following Central Acts were prepared, namely :-

1. The Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (49 of 1988).

1. The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 (32 of 2012).
2. Indian Contract Act, 1872 (9 of 1872)
3. The Indian Evidence Act, 1872 (1 of 1872).
5. The Fatal Accidents Act, 1855 (13 of 1855).
5. The Societies Registration Act, 1860 (21 of 1860).
6. The Official Languages Act, 1963 (19 of 1963).
7. The General Clauses Act, 1897 (10 of 1897).
8. The Press and Registration of Books Act, 1867 (25 of 1867).
9. The Indian Trusts Act, 1882 (2 of 1882).
10. The Divorce Act, 1869 (4 of 1869).
11. The Special Marriage Act, 1954 (43 of 1954).
12. The Right to Information Act, 2005 (22 of 2005).

14. THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGE SECTION

The Official Language Section of the Legislative Department is administratively responsible for the implementation of the Official Language Policy of the Union of India; the Official Language Act, 1963 and the Official Language Rules, 1976. This Section is also responsible for increasing the progressive use of Hindi for official purposes of the Union of India in addition to translation work from English to Hindi and vice-versa.

(1) Implementation of the Constitutional and other provisions of the Official Language Policy.

During the period from 01st January, 2023 to 31st March, 2024 the Legislative Department has taken the following steps to implement the Official Language Policy in all its manifestations:-

As per the provisions of the Official Language Rules 1976, at present, more than 90.80%, 82.18% and 68.23% letters to regions 'A', 'B' and 'C' are being sent in Hindi respectively. Constant efforts are being made to achieve the targets stipulated in the Annual Programme issued by the Department of Official Language, Ministry of Home Affairs. The replies to the letters, applications, representations etc. received in Hindi are being sent invariably in Hindi. The same received in English are also being answered in Hindi as per the Official Language Policy. All the Resolutions, General Orders, Rules, Notifications, Administrative Reports, other Reports, Contracts, Notices and the Documents to be laid before the Parliament are prepared and issued bilingually as per sub-section(3) of section 3 of the Official Language Act, 1963 .

Legislative Department was notified on 29th April, 1979 under sub-rule (4) of rule 10 of the Official Language Rules, 1976 for conducting the official business in Hindi. The officers and employees who are proficient in Hindi have been directed to submit the drafts etc. only in Hindi. For this purpose, 17 sections out of 31 have been specified to transact the official work in Hindi under sub-rule (4) of rule 8 of the Official Language Rules, 1976.

(2) The Quarterly Progress Reports for the Progressive Use of Official Language Hindi:

The Quarterly Progress Reports of Hindi are regularly sent to the Department of Official Language, Ministry of Home Affairs. Through these Reports, position of employees regarding Hindi training and their overall work in Hindi is reflected and it is ensured that the percentage of correspondence as well as noting and drafting in Hindi increases as per the Annual Programme issued by the Department of Official Language, Ministry of Home Affairs.

(3) Meetings of the Official Language Implementation Committee:

An Official Language Implementation Committee has been constituted in this Department under the Chairmanship of Joint Secretary and Legislative Counsel. The meeting of this Committee is held once in every three months regularly to assess the progressive use of Hindi for official purposes. The agenda and minutes of these meetings are sent to the Department of Official Language, Ministry of Home Affairs. The minutes are also circulated to all the officers and Sections of the Department for compliance. The first, second and third meetings of this committee were held on 31.03.2023, 23.06.2023 and 29.09.2023 respectively. This Committee provides effective means to identify problems and suggests the solutions with regard to the progressive use of Hindi. In the meetings of this Committee, the Annual Programme issued by the Department of Official Language, Ministry of Home Affairs for transacting the official work of the Union in Hindi, is also discussed and every effort is made to achieve the prescribed targets therein. The orders, circulars, directives, notifications, resolutions, recommendations etc. regarding the implementation of Official Language Policy of the Union of India are also discussed in these meetings.

(4) The Hindi Advisory Committee of the Ministry.

As per the guidelines issued by the Department of Official Language, Ministry of Home Affairs, the Hindi Advisory Committee of the Ministry was constituted on 4th August, 1967 under the Chairmanship of Hon'ble Minister for Law and Justice. This Committee has jointly been constituted for Department of Legal Affairs and Legislative Department. The Committee comprises Hon'ble Members of Parliament, nominated by Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs and the Committee of Parliament on Official Language, the nominees of Kendriya Sachivalaya Hindi Parishad, nominees of prominent All India Hindi Voluntary Organizations, nominees of the Ministry of Law and Justice and those of Department of Official Language as non-official members. The Secretaries, Additional Secretaries and the concerned Joint Secretaries of the Department of Legal Affairs, Legislative Department and Department of Official Language are the official members of this Committee.

(5) Hindi Training:

This Department nominates its officers/employees for the various training courses of Hindi conducted by Hindi Teaching Scheme, Department of Official Language, Ministry of Home Affairs. These Hindi Language Courses are Prabodh, Praveen and Pragya. There are training courses for Hindi typing and Hindi Shorthand also. The nomination to these Hindi courses is a continuous process as the officers/employees get recruited, promoted and transferred on regular basis.

(6) Hindi Pakhwada:

A 'Hindi Pakhwada' from 14th September to 29th September, 2023 was organized in this Department. Various Hindi competitions were held during this period and a large number of officers and employees

participated in these competitions. Out of these, two competitions were organized exclusively for non-Hindi speaking personnel. A total amount of Rs.88,300/- has been sanctioned as prize money for the winners of the competitions.

15. International Co-operation Section

To carry forward the Vision, Mission and Objective of the Legislative Department at international level, the following key areas have been identified for deliberation, research and training with several countries:—

- i. Legislative Drafting-emerging challenges;
- i. Legislative Drafting and Artificial Intelligence (AI);
- ii. Legislative Drafting and Access to Law;
- iii. Legislative Drafting and Rule of Law;
- iv. Simplification of Laws;
- v. Use of simple language in Legislative Drafting.

Various Memorandum of Understandings, Protocols and Agreements were entered by the Ministry of Law and Justice, with the Governments of Russian Federation, Turkey, Qatar, Uzbekistan and United Kingdom, inter alia, on mutual assistance in the drafting of legislations, exchange of information on drafting of laws, law-making process and to promote meetings, holding and organising symposiums, conferences and joint courses, etc.

It is the endeavor of the Legislative Department to continue deliberations, research and training jointly by the India and other countries for mutual benefit in dispensation of justice and rule of law in addition to capacity building in respective countries.

16. SOCIAL MEDIA UNIT

The Legislative Department is a service-oriented Department to cater the needs of Ministries/Departments in the Government of India in drafting Legislation and examinations of subordinate legislation. All proposals are confidential in nature and all policies belong to the concerned Ministry/ Department. This Department does not administer any citizen-centric schemes or programs. However, important events, policies and programs were disseminated on Social Media. The Social Media Unit of the Legislative Department plays a pivotal role in enhancing outreach, engagement, and communication with the general public and other stakeholders. The Unit undertakes the work related to posting of important events, days of national and international importance and other relevant festivals and events on various social media platforms viz. X, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, etc. of the Ministry on behalf of the Legislative Department. The Unit is involved in content creation, platform management and engagement strategies for social media.

During the said period, the Social Media Unit has made significant strides in improving the Department's online presence, engagement, and communication effectiveness. The Unit created three new posts and reposted five posts of dignitaries. The Unit also prepared a Social Media Calendar on a yearly basis and updated the same on a monthly basis.

17. OFFICIAL LANGUAGES WING

Introduction – Official Languages Wing of Legislative Department came into existence in the year 1976 as a successor Organisation of the Official Languages (Legislative) Commission as a part of Legislative Department. Functions which were being discharged by the Official Languages (Legislative) Commission, entrusted to this Wing with effect from the 1st October, 1976.

(1) Functions

It has been entrusted with the following functions :-

- (i) Preparation and publication of a standard legal terminology for use, as far as possible, in all Official Languages;
- (ii) Preparation of authoritative texts in Hindi of all Central Acts and Ordinances and Regulations promulgated by the President;
- (iii) Preparation of authoritative texts in Hindi of all Rules, Regulations and Orders made by the Central Government under any Central Act or any Ordinance or Regulation promulgated by the President;
- (iv) Preparation of authoritative texts of all Central Acts and Ordinances and Regulations promulgated by the President in the respective Official Languages of the States and to arrange for the translation of all Acts passed and Ordinances promulgated in any State into Hindi, if the texts of such Acts or Ordinances are in a language other than Hindi; and
- (v) Preparation of Hindi texts of deeds, legal documents like contracts, agreements, leases, bonds, mortgages etc. of different Departments;
- (vi) Preparation of Hindi texts of statutory Rules issued by Governments of States under Presidential Rule;
- (vii) Preparation of Hindi texts of all the Parliament Questions/Answers, Assurances etc, relating to the Ministry of Law and Justice;
- (viii) Training in Legislative Drafting in Hindi to Officers from Hindi speaking States;
- (ix) Work relating to Coordination Committee of Hindi speaking States for ensuring effective coordination in the evolution of uniform legal phraseology and model of standard clauses in Hindi and publication thereof;
- (x) Work relating to Hindi Salahkar Samiti of the Ministry of Law and Justice;
- (xi) Work relating to providing Grants-in-Aid to voluntary organisations for promotion of Official Languages in the field of law;
- (xii) Publication of diglot editions of Central Acts (with legislative history) and popularisation thereof;
- (xiii) Preparation and maintenance of India Code in Hindi (Bharat Sanhita) and also in diglot form; and

- (xiv) Publication of regional language versions of the Constitution of India and their release.
- (xv) To perform such other duties as may be assigned to it by the Government of India from time to time.

(2) LEGAL GLOSSARY

Since the inception of Official Languages (Legislative) Commission in 1961, seven editions of Legal Glossary have been brought out and every successive edition is larger in size. While the first edition (1970) contained 20,000 entries, the sixth edition (2001) of Legal Glossary contained approximately 63,000 entries spread over in eight parts. Latest 7th Edition of Legal Glossary has been published in the year 2015 and contained approximately 65,000 entries spread over in seven parts. The Legal Glossary brought out by the Official Languages Wing, which is one of the most important and prestigious publications, has received wide acclaim by discerning men of law and letters. The publication of 8th version of Legal Glossary is under process.

(3) CONSTITUTION OF INDIA

The authoritative text of the Constitution of India have been brought out in 17 other regional languages, namely, Assamese, Bengali, Dogri, Gujarati, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Manipuri, Odia, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu, Sindhi, Nepali and Konkani, in addition to Hindi (the Official Language of the Union).

(4) BHARAT SANHITA

All the Central Acts have been compiled and brought out in the form of India Code in handy volumes. The last edition of India Code was published in 1959. Action has already been initiated for bringing out Bharat Sanhita (Revised Edition of India Code) in diglot form in chronological order.

One of the salient features of the Code is that the statement of objects and reasons appended to the principal Bills have also been added at the end of each Act and included in the revised edition of India Code. Volume I to XXXI of the revised edition of India Code have already been published and manuscripts of the India Code Volume XXXII and XXXIII have been sent to Press.

(5) PREPARATION AND PUBLICATION OF AUTHORITATIVE TEXTS OF CENTRAL ACTS

During the period under report, authoritative texts of 31 Central Acts have been published in the Official Gazette under section 5 (1)(a) of the Official Languages Acts, 1963.

(6) PUBLICATION OF DIGLOT EDITIONS OF CENTRAL ACTS

Central Acts, for which there is likelihood of public demand, are published by the Official Languages Wing in diglot form. When there is a public demand for a particular Act, the same is published in diglot form (Hindi & English) for sale to general public.

(7) AUTHORISED HINDI TEXT OF BILLS, ORDINANCES, ETC.

As per Government of India (Allocation of Business) Rules, 1961 apart from several other works, the work related to Preparation of authoritative texts in Hindi of all Central Acts and of Ordinances promulgated and Regulations made by the President and of all rules, regulations and orders made by the Central Government under such Acts, Ordinances and Regulations is also allocated to legislative Department. This work is being

handled by Official Languages Wing. During the period under report –

- (i) **Bills/ Cabinet Notes/ Acts** - 83 Bills were handled by this Wing and prepared Hindi version of the Bills to be laid before the Houses of Parliament. In addition, Hindi version of 7 Notes for Cabinet, 57 Acts and 1 Ordinance, were also prepared by this Wing.
- (ii) **Notifications/ Recruitment Rules/ Regulations/ Parliament Questions/ Statutory Rules Etc.**- References are received in this Wing for preparation of General Statutory Rules, Notifications, Recruitment Rules etc from various Ministries/Departments for subordinate legislation. During the period under report following work was accomplished by this Wing in different Sections–
 - (a) 1126 proposals relating to preparation of Hindi version of statutory rules/notifications etc. were received from different Ministries/Departments of the Central Government.
 - (b) 495 proposals relating to preparation of Hindi version of Recruitment Rules were received from different Ministries/Departments of the Central Government.
 - (c) During the period under report, Hindi versions of various Parliament Questions answers/Assurances of this Ministry were also prepared on priority basis.

(8) MAINTENANCE OF CENTRAL ACTS, Etc.

The Correction Section of the Official Languages Wing is primarily concerned with maintaining and updating the Hindi text of the Central Legislations passed by the Parliament and in force. It also keeps Constitution of India and Manual of Election Laws up-to-date. The Section is responsible for carrying out the amendments made by the amending Acts passed by the Parliament in the Master Folders of Central Acts.

Besides, it also prepares the manuscripts of Hindi text of the Central Acts proposed to be published in diglot form. During the year the Hindi text the manuscript of Manual of Election Laws was prepared in conformity with the manuscript of English text thereof in the wake of General Election-2024. Hindi Manuscript of Constitution of India in conformity with the manuscript of English text thereof has also been prepared and finalized for publication.

During the year, since August, 2023, the Correction Section has started to upload the Hindi texts of un-repealed Central Acts in the India Code portal maintained by the Legislative Department alongside the English texts of respective Central Act. This process is being done in coordination with the National Informatics Centre. At present, Hindi texts of about 654 Central Acts have been uploaded in said India Code portal. This is an on-going and continuous process and the Acts uploaded therein are also made up-to-date by incorporating the amendments in the respective Act(s), if any.

(9) EDITING OF MANUSCRIPTS OF BILLS, ACTS, ORDINANCES, DIGLOT EDITIONS, ETC. AND PUBLICATION THEREOF

The Printing Section of the Official Languages Wing is primarily concerned with the editing of manuscripts and checking of proofs of Bills, Ordinances, Regulations, President's Acts etc; issued under the Constitution of India, Delimitation of Council Constituencies orders, etc; Bills, which are required to be introduced in a short time, are also printed on behalf of the Houses of People or the Council of States. Editing and Proof-checking of the publication in diglot form of the Constitution of India, Manual of Election Law, revised

Edition of India Code, modified diglot edition of Central Acts, statutory Rules and Orders, Annual Reports etc. are also done in this Section. This Section is also responsible for the printing and publication of Central Acts, Ordinances, Regulations, President's Act, etc; and their subsequent reprints in diglot form as publication for sale. This Section discharged all its responsibilities during the year under review. The Printing Section of the Official Languages Wing is also performing the duties of the publication Section. During the period under report, 31 Acts were authenticated.

(10) PREPARATION AND PUBLICATION OF STANDARD LEGAL DOCUMENTS

Section 3 (3)(iii) of the Official Languages Act, 1963 requires that both Hindi and English Languages are to be used for agreements, contracts, leases, bonds, tenders etc., issued by or on behalf of the Central Government. or any Ministry, Department or office thereof. In order to comply with the requirement of the said Act, the Official Languages Wing has prepared Hindi version of the documents in eight volumes for various Ministries and Departments of the Central Government with a view to achieve uniformity in their translation.

(11) PROMOTING THE INDIAN LANGUAGES IN THE SPHERE OF LAW

The Official Languages Wing, Regional Languages Unit is constantly doing the work of translation of Central Acts into Hindi as enshrined in the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution of India. So far as the regional languages are concerned, this work is being done with the co-operation of respective State Governments.

The Official Languages Wing has also published the authoritative texts of Central Acts in regional languages as envisaged under section 2 of the Authoritative Texts (Central Laws) Act, 1973 (50 of 1973). During the period under report, translation of 47 Central Acts have been approved by the Working Group (Regional Languages) and 83 Central Acts in Regional Languages including Hindi have been authenticated as authoritative texts by the President of India. Besides the Authoritative texts of the Constitution of India in addition to Hindi, it has been brought out in 17 regional languages, namely, Assamese, Bengali, Dogri, Gujarati, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Manipuri, Odiya, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu, Sindhi, Nepali and Konkani.

Further, it may be mentioned that during the period under report 73 Central Acts from various Regional Languages and also the first Edition of the Constitution of India in Dogri language and the Constitution 106th Amendment Act, 2023 in Malayalam and Marathi languages have also uploaded in our official website.

(12) WIDE DISTRIBUTION OF CENTRAL ACTS, LEGAL GLOSSARY ETC.

The information regarding publication of e-gazette copies of Central Acts have been supplied to various State Governments for translation into their respective regional languages. The Constitution of India and Legal Glossary also have been distributed into the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha and all the Ministries to the Government of India.

(13) WORK RELATING TO THE HINDI SALAHKAR SAMITI

The Hindi Salahkar Samiti of this Ministry is constituted vide Resolution No. E.4(1)/2019-O.L.(L.D.) dated 11th May, 2023 for three years. The functions of the Samiti are normally to advise the Central Government on matter relating to :-

- (i) preparation of Hindi version of Central Acts and statutory rules ;
- (i) the evolution of common legal terminology ;
- (ii) the production of standard law books in Hindi for imparting legal education in Hindi in law colleges and Universities ;
- (iii) publication of law journals and reports in Hindi ;
- (iv) matters ancillary and incidental to any of the above items ; and
- (v) suggest ways and means for the propagation and development of Hindi in the field of law for official use.

(14) GRANTS IN AID TO VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

There is a scheme for the promotion of Official Languages of the Union and States for propagation and development of Hindi and other Indian languages in the field of law. Under the scheme, Voluntary Organisations and institutions are provided with financial aid. Since 1985, the Official Languages Wing has been implementing this scheme to give financial assistance to those voluntary organisations which are engaged in the activities for development and propagation of literature in the field of law and other regional languages which could be in the form of proposed commentaries, treatises, books on legal subjects, law journals, law compendium and other publications as are conducive to enrichment, propagation and development of Hindi and other regional languages of the State. A High Powered Committee has been constituted w.e.f. 23rd November, 2022 for three years under the Chairmanship of Justice Dr. Satish Chandra (Retd.) Judge of High Court of Allahabad. Other members of the Committee are Dr. Vaibhav Goel, Prof., Sardar Patel Subharti Institute of Law (Faculty of Law), Meerut, Uttar Pradesh and Shri K.G. Aggarwal, Advocate, Supreme Court of India, New Delhi.

(15) SPECIAL STEPS ADOPTED FOR THE PROGRESSIVE USE OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

The material and information pertaining to Official Languages Wing has been hosted on the website with <http://legislative.gov.in> as URL. Apart from this, the important Acts of Parliament in various regional languages have also been hosted under the respective languages on the website of this Department. In order to facilitate printing of various Bills, Notifications, Orders, Recruitment Rules etc. the O.L. Wing has started using the Unicode fonts and provides soft copies of the Hindi Texts to the concerned Ministries/Departments etc.

The Constitution of India, the Manual of Election Laws and Income tax Act have already been hosted on website of this Department. This website has been further enriched by listing central enactments from the Year 1838 to 2018, Principal as well as amending Acts along with some important legislations have also been uploaded on the web site of this Department in O.L. Wing Home page in PDF format for the benefit of legal fraternity and general public as well as the law students.

During the period under report, Bill Section, Translation-I Section, Translation-II Section, Legislative- I, Legislative-II Section, Printing Section, Correction Section, Administration Section, Cash Section and Library of O.L. Wing were fully computerized. The Camera Ready copies of all the Bills were prepared during the period under report. For ease of working, the O.L. Wing has started using Mangal font which has universal functionality in Hindi Language.

The E-Office is being implemented in O.L. Wing for files pertaining to Administration and Cash Sections.

The Legal Glossary which has been hosted on the home page has been replaced with searchable PDF format for its wide spread and user friendly use.

An updated list of Names, Addresses, e-mail address and Contact Numbers of all the Group 'A' officers of the O.L. Wing in English and Hindi has also been hosted on the home page of this Department's website.

The Scheme for Assistance to Voluntary Organisations for promotion of Official Languages of the Union and the States in the field of Law has also been hosted on this Department's website.

All the sections of O.L. Wing have been computerized and equipped to use Hindi as well as English for data processing. O.L. Wing is making efforts to digitalize all its record to reduce carbon foot prints and reduce dependency on physical files.

18. VIDHI SAHITYA PRAKASHAN

In the year 1958, the Committee of Parliament on Official Languages recommended that arrangements be made to bring out authorised translation of the judgements of Supreme Court of India and High Courts and this work be entrusted to a Central Office under the supervision of Law Department. Thereafter, on the recommendations of the Hindi Advisory Committee, a "Journal Wing" was set up in the Legislative Department in the year 1968 with the object of promoting use of Hindi in the legal field. This "Journal Wing" was subsequently named as "**VIDHI SAHITYA PRAKASHAN**".

Initially, translation of judgements of Supreme Court from English to Hindi and making of short summary and headnotes thereof was started and the same was published in a monthly Hindi publication of reportable judgements of the Supreme Court in April, 1968 and was named "Uchchatama Nyayalaya Nirnaya Patrika". Another monthly publication containing judgements of the High Courts was started in January, 1969 and was named "Uchcha Nyayalaya Nirnaya Patrika". In the year 1987 "Uchcha Nyayalaya Nirnaya Patrika" was bifurcated into two Nirnaya Patrikas i.e. "Uchcha Nyayalaya Civil Nirnaya Patrika" and "Uchcha Nyayalaya Dandik Nirnaya Patrika".

Apart from the publication of the abovesaid three Nirnaya Patrikas, Vidhi Sahitya Prakashan is also responsible for following works, namely:—

- (a) Publication of law text books in Hindi as reference books for the benefit of lawyers, jurists, law students, litigants and public in general;
- (b) Sale of Hindi Law Text Books and diglot edition of Central Acts, Election Manual, Constitution of India and Legal Glossary etc.; and
- (c) Holding conferences, seminars and book exhibitions and sale counters in District Courts, High Courts and Law Collages all over India for promotion and propagation of Hindi in the legal field.

Digitization: Vidhi Sahitya Prakashan has made available Nirnaya Patrikas in PDF format (since 2012) at <http://legislative.gov.in/vidhi-sahitya> for the benefit of lawyers, jurists, law students, litigants and public in general. Nirnaya Patrikas have also been standardized with international Standard Serial number (ISSN).

Sale and Online sale of Law Publications and Payment Gateway: As part of ease of doing business initiative, Hindi Law Journals, Hindi Law Text Books, Diglot Edition of Central Acts, Constitution of India, Election Manual and Legal Glossary etc. have been made available for online sale on <https://bharatkosh.gov.in/Product/Product/> on digital payment basis. These publications are also available for sale at the sale counter of Vidhi Sahitya Prakashan, situate at ILI Building, First Floor, Bhagwan Das Road, New Delhi-110001. Exhibition-cum-sale counters are also organized for sale of these publications all over India in the campuses of Districts Courts, High Courts and Law Collages. During the period from 1st April, 2023 to 31st March, 2024, total sale of these publications is Rs. 8,13,390/-.

Achievements:

- (i) As per recommendations of Parliamentary Committee on Official Language and orders of Hon'ble President of India and vision of Hon'ble Prime Minister, Vidhi Sahitya Prakashan has made available Hindi Version of about 10,000 judgements (originally passed by Hon'ble Supreme Court in English) to Hon'ble Supreme Court alongwith head notes, short summary and Index of Cases and consented for uploading the same on their e-SCR Portal (<https://main.sci.gov.in>) and made the same available to the Lawyers, Jurists, Law Students and Litigants etc. Vidhi Sahitya Prakashan has also consented to provide Hindi Version of the judgements, passed by Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in English, in future for uploading on their e-SCR Portal for the benefit of Lawyers, Jurists, Law Students and Litigants.
- (ii) Vidhi Sahitya Prakashan has achieved its core objective of providing judgements of Hon'ble Supreme Court and various High Courts to the litigants and public in their own language i.e. Official Language Hindi under the official language policy of the Union, mandate of Constitution of India, recommendations of Parliamentary Committee on Official Language, Orders of Hon'ble President of India and vision of Hon'ble Prime Minister.

19. The Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023

The Act has been brought into the force with effect from 2nd January, 2024 to regulate the Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office of the Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners, the procedure for transaction of business by the Election Commission and for matters connected herewith or incidental thereto.

As per the Act, appointment of the following Election Commissioners have been made with effect from 15th March, 2024:-

- (1) Shri Gyanesh Kumar
- (2) Shri Sukhbir Singh Sandhu

20. RESERVATION FOR THE SCHEDULED CASTES, SCHEDULED TRIBES, OTHER BACKWARD CLASSES, EX-SERVICEMEN AND PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED PERSONS IN SERVICE POSTS.

Officers of the level of Deputy Secretary/Director are functioning as Liaison Officers for the three Administrative Wings of the Legislative Department, viz., Legislative Department (Main), Official Languages

Wing and Vidhi Sahitya Prakashan to oversee the implementation of Orders/Instructions of the Government on reservation for the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes, Ex-servicemen and Physically Handicapped persons in service/posts in respective units.

A Statement showing the total number of employees in the Department (Main), Official Languages Wing and Vidhi Sahitya Prakashan and number of employees belonging to the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes, Ex-servicemen and Physically handicapped persons and the female employees amongst them as on 31.03.2024 is enclosed as **Annexure-VII and Annexure-VIII**.

21. CELEBRATION OF SWACHHATA PAKHAWADA AND OTHER ACTIVITIES:

This Department has organised celebration of Swachhata Pakhawda, 2023 as per Swachhata Calendar, Ministry of Jal Shakti, Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation, International Yoga Day, International Women's Day, celebration of Run for Unity/Rashtriya Ekta divas under the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav from time to time. The Department has also celebrated Special Campaign 3.0 as per DAPARG guidelines. (Annexure-IX)



22. PUBLIC GRIEVANCES

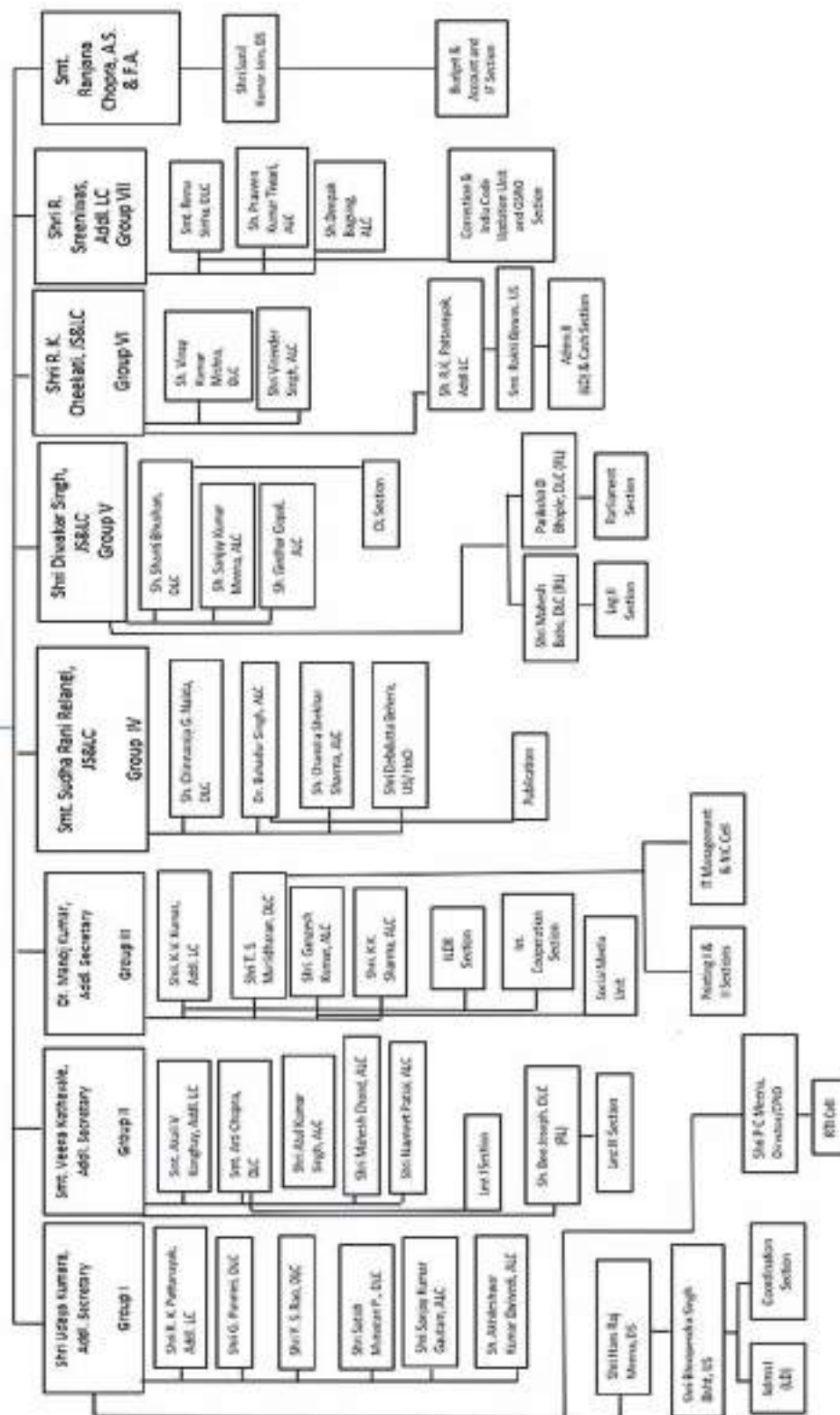
During the period from 1st January, 2023 to 31st March, 2024, Legislative Department received 1574 public grievances on CPGRAMS portal. Further 67 public grievances were pending before 1st January, 2023. During the said period 1614 grievances have been disposed of and action is being taken for disposal of remaining grievances on priority basis.

ORGANISATION CHART OF THE LEGISLATIVE DEPARTMENT - MAIN

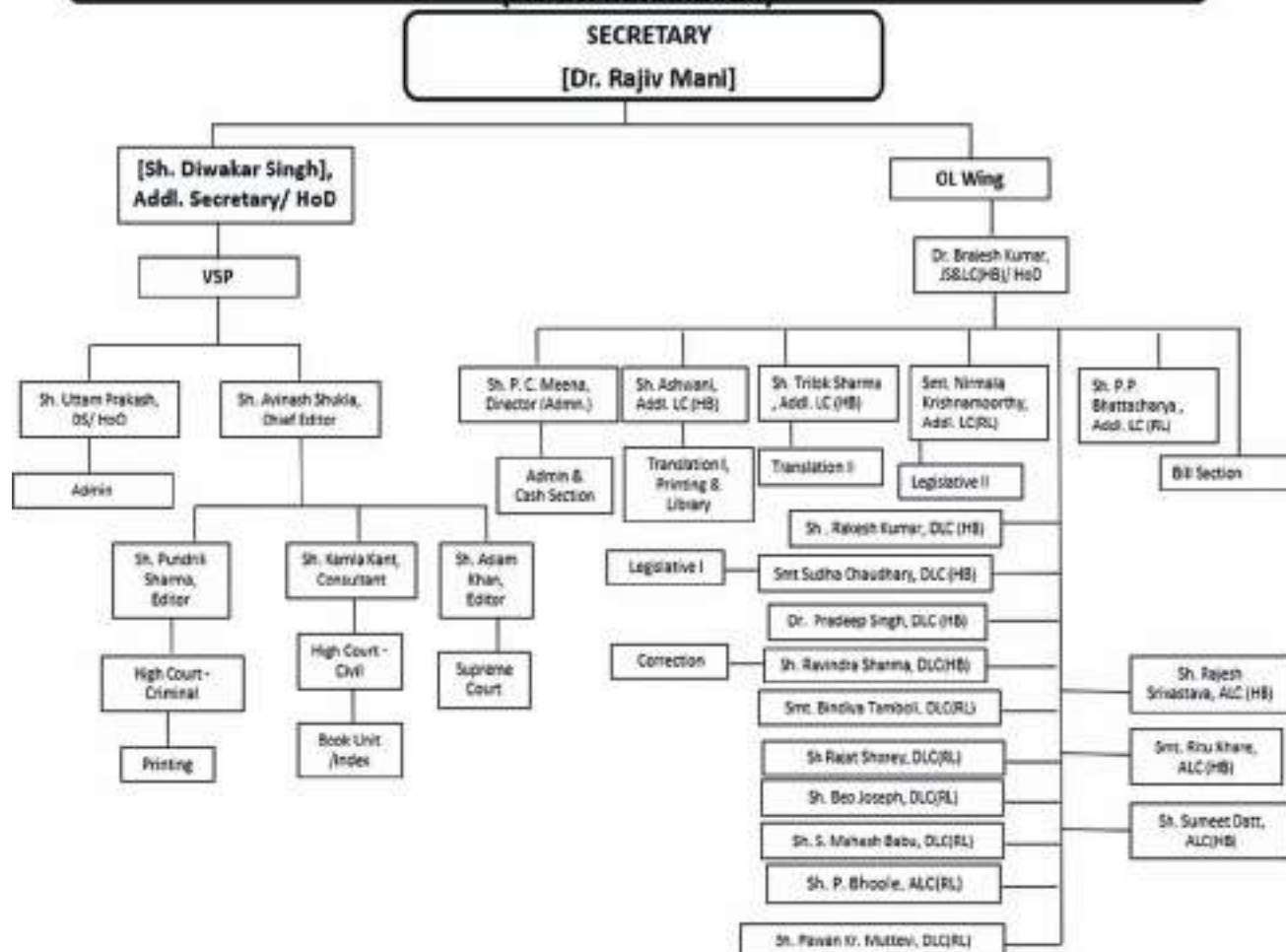
(As on 31.03.2024)

SECRETARY

[Dr. Rajiv Mani]



ORGANISATION CHART OF THE LEGISLATIVE DEPARTMENT- VSP & OL WING (As On 31.03.2024)



ANNEXURE-VII**(See Chapter- I, Para 20)**

STATEMENT SHOWING THE TOTAL NUMBER OF GOVERNMENT SERVANTS AND THE NUMBER OF SCHEDULED CASTES, SCHEDULED TRIBES, OTHER BACKWARD CLASSES, EX-SERVICEMEN AND PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED AMONGST THEM AS ON 31st MARCH, 2024.

Group	No. of Employees	SC	%	ST	%	OBC	%	Ex-Service-men	%	Physically Handi-capped	%
A	80	07	8.75%	08	10 %	19	23.75%	-	-	4	5%
B	90	17	18.88%	03	3.33%	19	20.65%	-	-	1	1.11%
C	107	25	23.36%	07	6.54%	20	18.69%	1	0.93%	-	-
Total	277	49	17.68 %	18	6.49 %	58	20.93 %	1	0.36 %	5	1.80 %

ANNEXURE-VIII**(See Chapter- I, Para 20)****REPRESENTATION OF FEMALE EMPLOYEES IN THE LEGISLATIVE DEPARTMENT AS ON 31st MARCH, 2024.**

GROUP	Total No. of Employees	No. of Female Employees	Percentage(%)
Group 'A'	80	21	26.25%
Group 'B'	90	21	23.33%
Group 'C'	107	18	16.82%
Total:-	277	60	21.66%

ANNEXURE-IX

(See Chapter- II, Para 21)









CHAPTER - II

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

1. ORGANISATION AND FUNCTIONS:

The Department of Justice forms part of the Ministry of Law and Justice. It is headed by the Minister of State (Independent Charge), Law and Justice. The Secretariat is headed by Secretary (Justice). The organizational setup includes 4 Joint Secretaries, 8 Deputy Secretaries/Directors and 11 Under Secretaries. The sanctioned strength of the Department of Justice is 102, out of which, 44 posts are lying vacant. Out of 58 in-position incumbents, 09 women officers/officials are working in this Department. The Organizational Chart of the Department of Justice is at **Annexure-I**.

1.1 As per the Government of India (Allocation of Business) Rules, 1961, (as amended from time to time), the subjects handled by the Department of Justice, inter-alia, include the following:

- i. Appointment, resignation and removal of the Chief Justice of India and Judges of the Supreme Court of India; their salaries, rights in respect of leave of absence (including leave allowance), pensions and travelling allowances.
- ii. Appointment, resignation and removal etc. of Chief Justice and Judges of High Courts in States; their salaries, rights in respect of leave of absence (including leave allowances), pensions and travelling allowances;
- iii. Appointment of Judicial Commissioners and Judicial Officers in Union Territories;
- iv. Constitution and organization (excluding jurisdiction and powers) of the Supreme Court (but including contempt of such Court) and the fees taken therein;
- v. Constitution and organization of the High Courts and the Courts of Judicial Commissioners except provisions as to officers and servants of these courts;
- vi. Administration of justice and constitution and organization of courts in the Union Territories and fees taken in such courts.;
- vii. Courts fees and Stamp duties in the Union Territories;
- viii. Creation of All India Judicial Service;
- ix. Conditions of service of District Judges and other Members of Higher Judicial Service of Union Territories;
- x. Extension of the Jurisdiction of a High Court to a Union Territory or exclusion of a Union Territory from the Jurisdiction of a High Court;
- xi. Legal Aid to the poor;
- xii. Administration of Justice; and
- xiii. Access to Justice, Justice Delivery and Legal Reforms;

2. APPOINTMENTS AND TRANSFER OF JUDGES

2.1 SUPREME COURT OF INDIA:

As on 31.03.2024, the Supreme Court was working at its full strength of 34 Judges including 03 women Judges. During the period 01.01.2023 to 31.03.2024, 15 Judges were appointed to the Supreme Court.

2.2 HIGH COURTS:

- (i) As on 31.03.2024, the Sanctioned Strength of Judges in the High Courts was 1114 against which 787 Judges were working with 327 vacancies. 115 recommendations for appointment of Judges received from various High Court Collegiums were under process with the Government and the Supreme Court Collegium. Recommendations against remaining 212 posts were yet to be received from High Court Collegiums.
- (ii) During the period 01.01.2023 to 31.03.2024, 120 fresh appointments of Judges were made in the High Courts and 111 Additional Judges were appointed as Permanent Judges. 03 Additional Judges were given a fresh term. Further, appointment of 30 Chief Justices of High Courts were also made. 37 Judges of High Courts were transferred from one High Court to another.
- (iii) The Judge strength of Gauhati High Court was enhanced by 06 thus increasing the approved Judge Strength in the Gauhati High Court from 24 to 30 Judges.

3. FAMILY COURTS:

- (i) The Family Court Act, 1984 provides for establishment of Family Courts by the State Governments in consultation with the High Courts concerned with a view to promote conciliation and secure speedy settlement of disputes relating to marriage and family affairs and for matters connected therewith. Under section 3(1)(a) of the Family Courts Act, it is mandatory for the State Governments to set up a Family Court for every area in the state comprising a city or a town whose population exceeds one million. In other areas of the State, Family Courts may be set up if the State Government deems it necessary.
- (ii) The main objectives for setting up of Family Courts are to create a Specialized Court to deal with family matters exclusively through instituting a mechanism for conciliation of the disputes relating to family expeditiously, to provide an inexpensive remedy and to have flexibility and an informal atmosphere in the conduct of proceedings.
- (iii) A scheme of central financial assistance was started in the year 2002-03 for setting up of Family Courts. As per the Scheme, Central Government provided 50 percent of the cost of construction of the building of the Family Court and residential accommodation of the Judge subject to a ceiling of Rs. 10 lac as a one-time grant as Plan support and Rs. 5 lac annually as the recurring cost under Non-Plan. The State Government is required to provide the matching share. A grant of Rs. 11.50 Cr. was released to the State Governments till the year 2012-13. The component provided for grant for construction of building of Family Courts and residential accommodations of the Judges, has since been subsumed in the Centrally Sponsored Scheme for Development of Infrastructure Facilities for Judiciary. **826 Family Courts were functional in 28 States/UTs (as on 31.03.2024).**

4. FAST TRACK COURTS:

Fast Track Courts (FTCs) are set up by the State Governments as per their need and resources in consultation with the High Courts concerned. The 14th Finance Commission recommended 1800 FTCs for dealing cases of heinous nature, cases related to women, children, senior citizen etc. and urged State Governments to utilize enhanced fund made available through tax devolution. As on 31.03.2024, **850 FTCs were functional in 20 States.**

5. SPECIAL COURTS FOR TRIAL OF CRIMINAL CASES INVOLVING ELECTED MPs/MLAs:

In compliance to Hon'ble Supreme Court Judgment in Ashwini Kumar Vs UoI [WP(C) 699 of 2016], 10 Special courts (02 Special Courts in Delhi and 01 each in the State of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal) are functional for expeditious trial and disposal of criminal cases involving elected MPs/MLAs.

6. FAST TRACK SPECIAL COURTS:

- 6.1 Pursuant to the Criminal Law Amendment Act, 2018, the Central Government is implementing a Centrally Sponsored Scheme for setting up of Fast Track Special Courts (FTSCs) including exclusive POCSO (e-POCSO) Courts since October, 2019 for expeditious trial and disposal of pending cases pertaining to Rape and Prevention of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act in a time-bound manner.
- 6.2 The Scheme was initially implemented for one year, which was extended upto March, 2023. The Scheme has now been extended till 31.03.2026, at an outlay of Rs. 1952.23 cr. with Rs. 1207.24 cr. as Central Share to be incurred from Nirbhaya Fund.
- 6.3 As per the information received from the High Courts, 754 FTSCs including 409 exclusive POCSO Courts were functional in 30 States/UTs. These courts had disposed off over 2,35,000 cases as on 31.03.2024.
- 6.4 For operationalization of these FTSCs, during the period January-March, 2023, an amount of Rs.12.9908 cr. and during the FY 2023-24, an amount of Rs.200.00 cr. had been released by this Department.

7. NATIONAL JUDICIAL ACADEMY:

- 7.1 The National Judicial Academy (NJA), Bhopal is an autonomous body established in 1993 under the Societies Registration Act, 1860. This independent body functions with its office at the Supreme Court of India and its campus at Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh. This is an Apex body which imparts judicial training to Judges / Judicial Officers of the country and provides facilities for training of ministerial officers working in the Supreme Court, study of court management and administration of justice in the State/ Union Territories, organizing conferences, seminars, lectures and research in matters relating to court management and administration. The core objectives of the said Academy have been to foster development of national judiciary in the country and strengthen administration of justice, judicial education, research and policy formulation.
- 7.2 The Hon'ble Chief Justice of India (CJI) is the Chairman of the General Body of the NJA as well as of the Governing Council of the Executive Committee and the Academic Council of NJA. The

affairs of the Academy are managed by a Governing Council. The Academy is fully funded by the Government of India. It has a Director as the Principal Executive Officer. During the period January-March, 2023, an amount of Rs.7.00 cr. and during the FY 2023-24 an amount of Rs.24.50 cr. had been released to National Judicial Academy. NJA, Bhopal had conducted 22 programs during the period January-March, 2023 and 85 programs during the FY 2023-24.

8. eCOURTS MISSION MODE PROJECT:

As part of the National e Governance Plan, the eCourt project is an integrated Mission Mode Project under implementation since 2007 for the ICT development of the Indian Judiciary based on the “National Policy and Action Plan for Implementation of Information and Communication Technology in the Indian Judiciary”. The e-Court Integrated Mission Mode Project was launched with the objective of improving access to justice using technology. The Phase I of eCourts was concluded in 2015 in which 14,249 Court sites were computerized. Phase II of the project started in 2015 with an outlay of Rs. 1,670 crores out of which a sum of Rs. 1668.43 crore has been released by the Government. Under this ambitious project, 18,735 District & Subordinate courts have been computerised so far.

(a) Wide Area Network (WAN) Connectivity:

The Wide Area Network (WAN) Project under eCourts project is aimed at connecting all District and Subordinate court complexes, spread across the country using various technologies like OFC (Optical Fiber Cable), RF (Radio Frequency), VSAT (Very Small Aperture Terminal). So far, 2977 sites have been commissioned out of 2992 sites with 10 Mbps to 100 Mbps bandwidth speed (completing 99.4% sites). This forms the backbone for the eCourts project ensuring data connectivity in courts across the length and breadth of the country.

Many courts under the eCourts project are located in far flung areas, termed as Technically Not Feasible (TNF) sites are being connected using every possible alternative means like OFC (Optical Fiber Cable), RF (Radio Frequency), VSAT (Very Small Aperture Terminal), Submarine cable etc.

(b) Case Information System:

Case Information Software (CIS) which forms the basis for the eCourt services is based on customized Free and Open-Source Software (FOSS) which has been developed by NIC. Currently, CIS National Core Version 3.2 is being implemented in District Courts and the CIS National Core Version 1.0 is being implemented for the High Courts.

Every single case has been provided a Unique Identification code which is called CNR number and QR Code. This has led to the development of National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG) as a new communication pipeline for judicial data transmission.

(c) e-Court Services:

As part of eCourt project, 7 platforms have been created to provide real time information on case status, cause lists, judgements etc. to lawyers/Litigants through SMS Push and Pull (4,74,371 SMS sent daily), Email (6,06,818 sent daily as on 31st December 2023),

multilingual and tactile eCourts services Portal (35 lakh hits daily), JSC (Judicial Service centres) and Info Kiosks. In addition, Electronic Case Management Tools (ECMT) have been created with eCourts Services Mobile App for litigant & lawyers (total 2.42 cr. downloads as of 31st May 2024) and JustIS app for judges (19,893 downloads till 31st May 2024). The JustIS Mobile App 2.0 is a tool that judges can use to effectively manage their courts and cases by keeping track of the cases that are pending before their court as well as the judges who work under them. Judges of the High Court and Supreme Court can now monitor the status of every State and District that falls under their purview by using this app, which is also made available to them.

(d) National Service and Tracking of Electronic Processes:

National Service and Tracking of Electronic Processes (NSTEP) has been launched for technology enabled process serving and issuing of summons. A GPS enabled device is given to the Bailiff for the service of summons leading to greater transparency and speedy delivery of processes. It provides real time status update of service of summons besides tracking of geographical coordinates of the process server at the time of serving. It has currently been implemented in 28 High Courts.

(e) National Judicial Data Grid:

Using NJDG developed under the eCourts Project, with elastic search technology, lawyers and litigants can today access case status information of 26.044 crore cases and more than 26.047 crore orders/judgments. Access has now been provided to data of all High Courts and District Courts in the country as well as Hon'ble Supreme Court of India. This is an important tool to identify, manage and reduce case pendency. Recently a feature for showing the reason for delay in disposal of the case has been added. In consonance with the National Data Sharing and Accessibility Policy (NDSAP) announced by the Government of India, Open Application Programming Interface (API) has been provided to the Central & State Government to allow easy access to the NJDG data using a departmental ID and access key. This will allow the institutional litigants to access the NJDG data for their evaluation and monitoring purposes. To track cases related to land disputes, Land Records data of 26 States have been linked with NJDG.

(f) Virtual Courts:

28 Virtual Courts have been set up in 21 States / UTs viz. Delhi (2), Haryana, Chandigarh, Gujarat (2), Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala (2), Maharashtra (2), Assam, Chhattisgarh, Jammu and Kashmir (2), Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, Meghalaya, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand (2), Madhya Pradesh, Tripura, West Bengal and Rajasthan and Manipur (2) to try traffic offences. The concept is aimed at reducing the footfalls in the court by eliminating the presence of the violator or advocate in the court. Virtual court can be managed by a virtual judge (which is not a person but an algorithm) whose jurisdiction can be extended to the entire state and working hours can be 24X7. Over 5.08 crore cases (5,08,99,608) have been handled by 28 virtual courts and in more than 54 lakhs (54,72,772) cases online fine of Rs.561.09 crores has been realised till 31.05.2024. In November 2020, Delhi High Court has issued "Digital NI Act Courts-Project Implementation Guidelines" and set up 34 Digital

Courts dealing with Negotiable Instruments Act cases. Besides being paperless, such Courts are environmentally friendly and have also led to saving of judicial manpower and added to the convenience of the citizens.

(g) Video Conferencing:

Video conferencing emerged as the mainstay of the Courts during the Covid lockdown period as physical hearings and normal court proceedings in the congregational mode were not possible. Since Covid lockdown started, the District & Subordinate courts heard 2,33,67,497 cases while the High Courts heard 86,35,710 cases (totalling 3.20 crores) till 31.05.2024 using video conferencing. only. The Supreme Court had nearly 7,54,443 hearings from 23.03.2020 to 04.06.2024. Funds have been sanctioned for additional VC equipment for 14,443 court rooms. Funds for setting up 2506 VC Cabins have been made available. Additional 1500 VC Licenses have been acquired. VC facilities are already enabled between 3240 court complexes and corresponding 1272 jails.

Live Streaming of court proceedings has been started in High Courts of Gujarat, Gauhati, Orissa, Karnataka, Jharkhand, Patna, Madhya Pradesh, Uttrakhand & Constitutional Bench of Hon'ble Supreme Court of India thus allowing media and other interested persons to join the proceedings.

(h) e- Filing:

An e filing system has been rolled out for the electronic filing of legal papers. This allows the lawyers to access and upload documents related to the cases from any location 24X7 which makes coming to the court for filing of papers unnecessary. Further the details of the case entered in the e-Filing application are consumed in the CIS software and hence chances of mistakes are minimized. Upgraded version 2.0 is more user friendly and have upgraded features like Advocates portfolio, Advocate clerk entry module, calendar and integration with social media platforms etc.

The new e-filing 3.0 Portal has been launched and can be accessed on <https://filing.ecourts.gov.in>. In the new version, new tab is provided which allows Advocates and litigants to record their oath with in-system video recording while uploading documents. The new version has also provided new dashboard including the options of my partners, Case Filing, Vakalatnama, pleading, e-payments, applications and portfolio. Help section provided in the new version provides tutorial videos, FAQ and user manual. It also provided option to litigant to send offer to the Advocates. The new portal also provides the option of indexing of the documents for the Advocates. To promote e-Filing, all Central & State Government departments including the PSUs have been requested to use e filing in all courts.

(i) eSewa Kendras:

To make justice delivery inclusive and to mitigate handicaps caused by digital divide, 1057 eSewa Kendras have been rolled out to provide citizen centric services to lawyers and litigants.

(j) e-Payments:

e-Filing of cases requires facilities for e-Payments of Court Fees which includes court fees, fines and penalties which are directly payable to the Consolidated Fund. e-Filing of cases

requires facilities for e-Payments of court fees. Online payment of court fees, fines and penalties has been initiated through <https://pay.ecourts.gov.in>. Introduction of electronic collection of court fees and other civil payments requires appropriate amendments in the existing Court Fees Act.

(k) Judgment & Order Search Portal:

A 'Judgment & Order Search' portal has been inaugurated for the convenience of stakeholders in searching judgments easily. The new portal for judgments search is set to provide a repository for Judgments and Final Orders of the High Courts. The 'Judgment Search' segment could be reached at <https://judgments.ecourts.gov.in>, which encapsulates the features such as search by Bench, Case Type, Case Number, Year, Petitioner/ Respondent Name, Judge Name, Act, Section, Decision: From Date, To Date and Full Text Search.

(l) Justice Clocks:

To make effective use of database created through National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG) and to make the information available to public, LED Display Message Sign Board System called Justice Clocks have been installed. The purpose of Justice Clock is to bring awareness to the public about justice sector, advertising the various schemes of the department and to give status of various fields to the public, thereby providing information about disposal by courts, various schemes and services offered in the court complexes and to give status of various fields to the public and other information through which the citizens can benefit.

A total of 39 Justice Clocks in 25 High Courts (Allahabad (Allahabad and Lucknow), Andhra Pradesh, Bombay (4 benches), Calcutta, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Gauhati (4 benches - Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Nagaland, Assam), Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh High Court (2 benches), Jharkhand, Karnataka (3 benches), Kerala, Madhya Pradesh (3 benches), Madras (2 benches), Manipur, Meghalaya, Orissa, Patna, Punjab & Haryana, Rajasthan (2 benches), Sikkim, Telangana, Tripura, and Uttarakhand has already been installed. One Justice Clock is also installed at Department of Justice, Jaisalmer House. Virtual Justice Clock is also hosted on the portal of High Court, Hon'ble Supreme Court of India and Department of Justice.

Virtual Justice Clock is an initiative to exhibit vital statistics of the justice delivery system at the Court level giving the details of the cases instituted, cases disposed and pendency of cases on day/week/month basis at the Court level. The effort is to make the functioning of the courts accountable and transparent by sharing with the public the status of case disposals by the court.

(m) IEC Campaign and eCourts Outreach Activities:

A divyang friendly website developed on S3WaaS platform has been launched exclusively for the e-Committee in 14 languages. This website disseminates the e-Courts Project related information to all stakeholders. Provision has been made for the High Courts to upload their achievements and their best practices. The e committee website has also been linked to the website of the DoJ.

A Manual on e-Filing entitled as “Step by Step Guide for e-Filing” has been prepared and made available on the e-Filing portal, in both English and Hindi, for use of advocates and litigants. It has also been released in 11 regional languages. The e-Committee, Supreme Court of India has issued user manual for e-Courts Services Mobile Application and uploaded it on the official website of e-Committee in 14 languages namely English, Hindi, Bengali, Assamese, Gujarati, Kannada, Khasi, Malayalam, Marathi, Nepali, Odia, Punjabi, Tamil and Telugu. A Brochure in English and Hindi on “How to register for e-Filing” has been made available on the e-Filing portal for the use of lawyers in 12 regional languages. As part of awareness campaign, a YouTube Channel has been created in the name of eCourts Services where video tutorials on e-Filing have been made available for larger outreach to stakeholders. To conduct awareness programme for advocates on eFiling and ECMT tools under eCourt Services, training of trainers has already been undertaken by eCommittee of the Supreme Court at the National and State level. 25 Master Trainers have been trained in each High Court who in turn have already trained 5409 Master Trainers across the country. These, 5409 Master Trainers have in turn imparted training programme on eCourt Services and eFiling in each district of the country for advocates in their regional languages and also identified Master Trainer Advocates.

The eCommittee of the Supreme Court of India has conducted 392 trainings and awareness programmes on the ICT services provided under the eCourts project, from May 2020 to December 2023. These programmes have covered nearly 6,14,124 stakeholders.

(n) eCourts Phase III:

The Cabinet on 13.09.2023 has approved eCourts Phase-III with a budgetary outlay of Rs.7,210. Taking the gains of Phase-I and Phase-II to the next level, the main objective of the Phase-III is to create a unified technology platform for the judiciary, which will provide a seamless and paperless interface between the courts, the litigants and other stakeholders. The proposed timeframe for the Project is four years starting from 2023 onwards. It envisages digitization of the court records, both legacy records and pending cases; state of the art and latest Cloud based data repository for easy retrieval; eSewa Kendras at all court complexes across India; paperless courts; video conferencing facilities to be expanded to also cover district hospitals; Live Streaming of court proceedings and expansion of the scope of Virtual Courts. The project will help provide a smoother user experience by building a “smart” ecosystem. Registries will have less data entry and minimal file scrutiny facilitating better decision-making and policy planning. The eCourts Phase-III will thus prove to be a game changer in ensuring ease of justice by making the Court experience convenient, inexpensive and hassle free to all the citizens of the country.

Under eCourts Phase III, out of Rs. 825 crores allotted in FY 23-24, highest ever funds amounting to 805.57 Crore were released in one single financial year under the Project. The funds were received in the month of October’23 and expenditure of Rs 768.25 Cr (93.11%) was made in the space of five months, which is the highest under eCourts Project till date.

(o) Awards and Recognition:

- eCourts Project has been awarded the National e-Governance Award 2021-2022 in ‘Gold Category’ under the patronage of Department of Administrative Reforms

and Public Grievances for its “Judgement and Search portal” (<https://judgments.ecourts.gov.in>).

- eCourts Project has been awarded Digital India Award 2022 in Category- Digital Empowerment of Citizens by Hon’ble President of India under the patronage of Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Government of India for Judgment Search Portal.
- eCommittee, Supreme Court of India has been awarded national award for institutions engaged in empowering persons with disabilities, 2021 (Sarvshrestha Sugamya Yatayatke Sadahan/ Sookhana Evam Sanchar Prodyogiki) for making legal space more accessible & inclusive.
- e-Courts Project has been awarded the National Award 2020-2021 in ‘Gold Category I – Excellence in Government Process Re-engineering for Digital Transformation’, under the patronage of Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances for exemplary implementation of e-governance initiatives.
- e-Courts services has been awarded the prestigious Digital India Award 2020 instituted under the aegis of the National Portal of India for Excellence in Digital governance.
- Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Government of India has awarded the eCourts Project with the Gems of Digital India Award 2018 (Jury’s Choice) for excellence in e-Governance
- As per data published on Electronic Transaction Aggregation & Analysis Layer (eTaal) portal, eCourts is one of the leading projects among top 5 MMPs in India with total 446.41 Cr e-transactions in last one year.

9. NATIONAL MISSION FOR JUSTICE DELIVERY AND LEGAL REFORMS:

9.1 Objectives: National Mission for Justice Delivery and Legal reforms was set up in August, 2011 with the twin objectives of increasing access by reducing delays and arrears in the system and enhancing accountability through structural changes and by setting performance standards and capacities. The Mission has been pursuing a coordinated approach for phased liquidation of arrears and pendency in judicial administration, which, *inter-alia*, involves better infrastructure for courts including computerization, increase in strength of subordinate judiciary, policy and legislative measures in the areas prone to excessive litigation, re-engineering of court procedure for quick disposal of cases and emphasis on human resource development.

9.2 Advisory Council

To advise on the goals, objectives and strategies of the National Mission and the Action Plan and its implementation, an Advisory Council has been constituted under the Chairmanship of Minister of Law and Justice with wide ranging membership which include Minister of State in the Ministry of Home Affairs; Chairperson of the Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievance, Law and Justice; Minister of Law & Courts, Andhra Pradesh; Minister

of Law, Justice & Parliamentary Affairs, Jammu & Kashmir; Attorney General of India; Chairperson, Law Commission of India; Secretary, Department of Legal Affairs; Secretary, Legislative Department; Solicitor General of India; Secretary-General, Supreme Court of India; Director, National Judicial Academy; and Chairman, Bar Council of India. Secretary, Department of Justice is the Convener of the Advisory Council. An Action Plan of the National Mission was formulated covering 5 strategic initiatives which are reviewed by the Advisory Council of the National Mission from time to time. The Advisory Council meets once in six months. Eleven meetings of the Advisory Council have been held so far.

9.3 Subordinate Judiciary

As per the Constitutional framework, the selection and appointment of judges in subordinate courts is the responsibility of the High Courts and State Governments concerned. As per information made available by the High Courts on Department of Justice MIS portal, as on 31.03.2024, the sanctioned strength of Judicial Officers in District and Subordinate Courts was 25,504 as against the working strength of 20,439 judicial officers with 5,065 vacant posts. The sanctioned and working strength of judicial officers in District and Subordinate Courts has increased by 5,986 and 5,324 judicial officers respectively since year 2014.

9.4 Pendency in Courts

In pursuance of a Resolution passed in Chief Justices' Conference held in April, 2015, Arrears Committees have been set up in all 25 High Courts to clear cases pending for more than five years. Arrears Committees have been set up under District courts as well.

The status of pendency of cases in various courts in the country (as on 31.03.2024) is given below:

Supreme Court	80,194
High Courts	61,83,070
District and Subordinate Courts	4,42,76,365

Source : NJDG portal

The National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG), provides data on cases pending in the District Courts & Subordinate Courts, High Courts and Supreme Court. NJDG has been appreciated and acknowledged by the World Bank in the Ease of Doing Business Report, 2020 as an effective tool for generation of Case Management Reports. Since the year 2023, data regarding the pendency of cases in Supreme Court on real-time basis is also available on NJDG.

9.5 Reforms under Enforcing Contracts Indicator of World Bank's Doing Business Report:

The Doing Business Report (now discontinued and being replaced with the new B-Ready Framework) was the flagship publication of the World Bank Group that benchmarked business regulations in 191 economies. The Doing Business Report measured regulations that enhanced business activity and those that constrained it. Department of Justice (DoJ) was the nodal department for the Enforcing Contract indicator. The performance of any country on the "Enforcing Contracts" indicator was measured against the time taken for disposal of a commercial dispute; costs involved in resolving a commercial dispute; the quality of judicial processes and good practices followed by the commercial courts.

This Department had created a Task force under the Chairmanship of Secretary, Department of Justice, with members from the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Department of Legal Affairs (DoLA), the High Courts of Delhi, Bombay, Karnataka and Calcutta and the Law Departments of Delhi, Maharashtra, Karnataka and West Bengal and the e-Committee of the Supreme Court. The concerted efforts of the Government and the Indian judiciary in implementing reforms under the “Enforcing Contracts” Indicator had led to India’s rank improving to 163rd rank in 2020 from 186th in 2014. This jump of 23 ranks is a result of the game-changing reforms undertaken by the government over the past 6 years.

Enforcing Contracts indicator measured the following parameters:

- a. Time estimates for commercial cases: This included time taken during filing and service phase, trial and judgment phase, and enforcement of judgment phase.
- b. Cost estimates for commercial cases: This included attorney fees, court fees (upto judgment only) and expert fees, and enforcement fees.
- c. Quality of Judicial Process Index: This included court structure and proceedings, case management, court automation, and alternative dispute resolution.

9.5.1. Following are some of the key reforms undertaken for the Enforcing Contracts indicator:

The Department has spearheaded following steps for exclusive and focused attention to resolve commercial disputes expeditiously and strengthen the “Enforcing Contracts” regime and institutionalized these steps in collaboration with judiciary, as follows:

- i. For speedy resolution of commercial cases, the government introduced the Commercial Courts Act, 2015 (as amended in 2018) which led to establishment of **“Dedicated Commercial Courts”** at district level in Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru and Kolkata. The specified value of commercial cases to be resolved in these commercial courts is starting from Rs 3 lakhs. These courts have exclusive jurisdiction as well as exclusive manpower. There are 46 Dedicated Commercial Courts in Delhi including 2 paperless digital commercial courts; 6 Dedicated Commercial Courts in Mumbai; 8 Dedicated Commercial Courts in Bengaluru city and 2 Dedicated Commercial Courts in Bengaluru Rural; 2 Dedicated Commercial Courts in Kolkata and 2 more to be set up. This structural reform introduced by the government is aimed at facilitating settlement of commercial disputes expeditiously for litigants and lawyers and at the same time instill confidence in the corporate investors.
- ii. To promote fair and unbiased adjudication of commercial matters, the government in collaboration with the judiciary is implementing eCourts project. Under this project, for enhancing judicial transparency and court automation, **“Random and Automatic Allocation”** of commercial cases has been made operational. All newly filed commercial cases in the Dedicated Commercial Courts are automatically and randomly allocated to the judges using the latest Case Information System (CIS 3.2) software.
- iii. **“Case Management Hearing or pre-trial conference facility”** under CPC Order XV-A of the Commercial Courts Act, 2015 introduced by the government has been made operational by the government for all commercial cases in Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru and

Kolkata. It is held before the trial and narrows down contentious issues/evidentiary questions, expedites trial process and discourages any delay tactics. The aim is to speed up case disposal by streamlining the trial process, thus benefitting the litigants as well as lawyers.

- iv. To reinforce the Prime Minister's flagship Digital India program, the initiatives under Enforcing Contracts indicator have galvanized efforts such as **"E-Filing Facility"**. E-filing has made filing of cases real time and online which means that cases can be filed by a lawyer from home or any location, any time 24x7. E-filing system is aimed at promoting paperless filing and create time and cost saving efficiencies by adopting technology-driven solution to file cases before courts in India.
- v. **"E-Summons"**: The process of issuing and serving the summons electronically through email followed by SMS alert which is generated through eCourt Services Portal is fully operational in Delhi and Mumbai Courts. This pioneering initiative of the government in consonance with the Digital India vision will save time and resources by automatically delivering the summons to parties in dispute. A Software patch for consuming database of companies registered with the Registrar of companies, Ministry of Corporate Affairs has been developed to facilitate sending of online summons in commercial disputes and is operational in the commercial courts of Bengaluru, Mumbai and Delhi.
- vi. The government introduced the Commercial Courts (Amendment) Act, 2018 that ushered in a game-changing policy initiative of **"Pre-institution mediation and settlement"** of commercial cases where no urgent interim relief is contemplated through subject expert mediators empaneled by the District Legal Services Authorities.
- vii. The vision of Digital India and the eCourts project is to transform the judicial system of the country by ICT enablement of courts. In order to enhance judicial productivity, both qualitatively & quantitatively, making the justice delivery system accessible, cost effective, reliable and transparent, **"Electronic Case Management Tools (ECMTs)"** have been introduced for both Judges and lawyers. Integration of Electronic Case Management Tools in one digital platform has been done which is a key reform under Enforcing Contracts in World Bank's Ranking.
- viii. Just IS app is an essential tool for Judicial Officers and has been made available exclusively for India's judicial officers to empower them. It gives a quick glance of the number of listed cases on the present day, undated cases, received by the Institution and by transfer in the last month, current pending and disposed commercial matters in the current month. The eCourts app aims to enhance judicial productivity and workflows by providing case information with speed and accuracy to lawyers and litigants.
- ix. The government has recognized that an effective and faster system of resolution of high value commercial disputes needs specialized forums for expeditious adjudication. **Special Commercial Benches in various High Courts** have been set up to hear high value commercial cases above Rs. 500 crores.
- x. Various High Courts have established **Designated Special Courts for infrastructure projects**. High Court(s) of Calcutta, Karnataka, Allahabad and Madhya Pradesh have

allocated specific days in a week for hearing of such matters, so that these courts function as dedicated courts for infrastructure contracts on such days.

- xi. e-Committee, Supreme Court has enabled compliance of *three adjournment Rule* by creating the facility of colour banding. The colours provide information regarding the number of adjournments in a case.
- xii. Dedicated Websites for Commercial Courts have been developed for the High Courts of Bombay, Calcutta, Karnataka and Delhi.
- xiv. Ease of Doing Business Portal- DOJ has also launched the Enforcement of Contracts Portal which provides a comprehensive source of information on reforms being undertaken on the “Enforcing Contracts” parameters.

9.6. Rule of Law Index (ROLI):

The Rule of Law Index is developed and published by World Justice Project (WJP). ROLI 2023 covers 142 countries and ranks them based on the country-specific data collected across 8 factors and 44 sub-factors based on the four principles of “Accountable Government, Good Laws, Good Process and Access to Justice.” As per the latest report released in October 2023, India’s rank in ROLI stood at 79 out of 142 countries assessed by the WJP. Department of Justice, as the nodal department, has been working with 22 stakeholder Ministry(s)/Department(s) to improve India’s performance on the 8 key indicators/factors and 44 sub-factors identified for the purpose under the GIRG (Global Indices for Reforms and Growth) exercise launched by NITI Aayog.

9.7 Data Governance Quality Index(DGQI):

The DGQI Evaluation Exercise is undertaken by DMEO and NITI Aayog to assess the data preparedness of different Central Ministries/Departments as part of its Data Governance Quality Index (DGQI) to monitor data preparedness and use of information technology. The DGQI assessment is conducted periodically for each quarter of the financial year. The last such exercise concluded on March, 2024. Department of Justice secured a score of 4.74 out of 5 in Quarter 3, 2023-24, DGQI 2.0 assessment improving upon its last performance in Quarter 4, 2022-23 score of 4.57 out of 5.0. To achieve the frontier score of 5.0, a Data Strategy Unit (DSU) has been constituted by the Department to steer the implementation of the action plan/roadmap for DGQI. The Department has also formulated and issued Data Management Guidelines with the aim of developing policies, programs and practices that would control protect and enhance the value of datasets and information reported/collected by the Department of Justice.

10. SCHEME FOR ACTION RESEARCH AND STUDIES ON JUDICIAL REFORMS:

A Scheme for Action Research and Studies on Judicial Reforms was initiated by the Department of Justice in year 2013 with necessary approval of Standing Finance Committee. From the financial year 2021-22 onwards, the Scheme was incorporated under the “non-scheme” component of Department of Justice. The objective of the Action Research is to promote research and studies in the field of justice delivery, legal research and judicial reforms. As on 31.03.2024, 51 projects have been sanctioned under the Scheme out of which 44 projects have been completed.

11. CENTRALLY SPONSORED SCHEME (CSS) FOR DEVELOPMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE FACILITIES FOR THE JUDICIARY:

- 11.1 Objective and Scope: Development of Infrastructural Facilities for Judiciary in the States is the prime responsibility of the State Governments concerned. However, to augment the resources of the State Governments, a Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) for development of infrastructure facilities for the judiciary was launched by the Central Government in the year 1993-94. The scheme used to cover construction of court buildings and residential quarters for Judges/Judicial Officers of District and Subordinate Courts. The Scheme has been extended for a further period of five years from 01.04.2021 to 31.03.2026. The scheme now also covers the construction of toilets, digital computer rooms and lawyers' hall in the district and subordinate courts.
- 11.2 Since inception of the Scheme, the Central Government has provided financial assistance amounting to Rs. 10927.215 crore to State Governments / Union Territories. Out of this, an amount of Rs. 7482.95 crore has been provided since 2014-15 till 31st March 2024 (68.47%), which includes Rs. 857.20 crore in 2022-23 and Rs. 1061 crore released during 2023-24 (as on 31.03.2024). As per information collected from High Courts as of 31st March, 2024, there were 21,572 court halls / court rooms available for District and Subordinate Courts in the country. In addition, 3,084 court halls / court rooms were under construction as per Nyaya Vikas Portal. Comparing these figures with the working strength of 20,308 judges / judicial officers reported by High Courts as of 31st March 2024, adequate court rooms/court halls are available for the current working strength of judicial manpower. 5,290 Court Halls and 3,409 Residential Accommodation were constructed / completed from 2014-15 till 31.03.2024; out of this 320 court halls and 160 residential units have been constructed in the year 2023-24 till 31.03.2024. The focus is now to match the availability of court rooms / court halls with the sanctioned strength of 25,485 judicial officers / judges in District and Subordinate Courts. Considerable progress has also been made with regard to availability of residential units for judicial officers in District and Subordinate Courts. As of 31st March 2024, total number of 18,975 residential units were available and 3,011 residential units were under construction.
- 11.3 After extension of the scheme and incorporation of new features therein, the Guidelines of the Scheme have been revised on 19 August 2021 for smooth and effective implementation of the Scheme. The revised guidelines include weightage criteria, a scientific formula, adopted from the year 2018-19 for inter-state distribution of funds under the Scheme. The criteria is based on 4 parameters, namely, (i) number of court halls left for construction with reference to sanctioned/working strength of judicial officers in the State/UT (ii) number of residential units left for construction with reference to sanctioned/working strength of judicial officers in the State/UT (iii) working strength of judicial officers with reference to sanctioned strength of judicial officers in the State/UT, and (iv) pendency of 10 years and more old cases in subordinate judiciary. Based on such criteria, the tentative allocation of funds to States/UTs is informed to the State Governments and UT Administrations at the beginning of the financial year to enable them to submit their proposals accordingly. The guidelines also include provision of Flexi Fund scheme, as per which States/UTs, if they desire, can set aside the funds to meet local needs and requirements e.g. customization required with respect to local conditions of weather, climate etc. or meet specific local demands.
- 11.4 Nyaya Vikas Web Portal and Mobile App Version 2.0: An on-line monitoring system has been developed with the technical assistance of National Remote Sensing Centre of ISRO. For the purpose,

the web portal and mobile app named “Nyaya Vikas” was developed for monitoring of construction projects in 2018. The State Governments have nominated a Nodal Officer at State level and Surveyors & Moderators for each project to enter and upload data/information relating to ongoing and completed projects. Based on the experience and observations of the Users at the Central and State level, Nyaya Vikas web portal and Mobile App has been upgraded and version 2.0 has been launched and is live from 01.04.2020. The Users in all States and Union Territories are entering data through web portal and uploading photographs through mobile app with geo-tagging. Total number of projects entered in the portal is 3,088, including 1,674 completed, 948 under construction and 466 proposed. 2,608 projects have been geo-tagged.



District Court, Delhi



District Court, Akola (Maharashtra)



Civil Court Building, Gujarat



Residential Quarter, Bhagalpur

12. GRAM NYAYALAYAS:

- 12.1 The Gram Nyayalayas Act, 2008 came into force with effect from 2nd October, 2009. The Act provides for establishment of Gram Nyayalayas at intermediate Panchayat level for the purpose of providing access to justice to the citizens at their doorstep. A copy of the Act has been placed on the

website of Department of Justice. In terms of Section 3(1) of the Gram Nyayalayas Act, State Governments, after consultation with the High Court concerned, may, by notification, establish one or two more Gram Nyayalayas for every Panchayat at intermediate level or a group of contiguous Panchayats at intermediate level in a district or where there is no Panchayat at intermediate level in any State, for a group of contiguous group Panchayats. Establishment of Gram Nyayalayas is, therefore, not mandatory on the part of State Governments as per the Act. However, State Governments are requested from time to time to establish Gram Nyayalayas.

- 12.2 Total number of 477 Gram Nyayalayas have been notified by 15 States, out of which 300 Gram Nyayalayas are functional. To encourage the states, the financial assistance is provided for non-recurring expenses for setting up of Gram Nyayalayas, and for meeting the cost of recurring expenditure towards running these Gram Nyayalayas for the first three years. The recurring and non-recurring assistance is subject to financial ceilings, as provided in the guidelines of the scheme. The Central Government is providing assistance to states for Gram Nyayalayas which include Rs. 18.00 lakh per Gram Nyayalaya towards the cost of establishing the Gram Nyayalaya as a Ministry of Law and Justice one-time assistance (Rs. 10 lakh for office building, Rs. 5 lakh for vehicle and Rs. 3 lakh for furnishing the office) and Rs. 3.20 lakh per Gram Nyayalaya per annum as recurring expenditure for an initial period of three years.
- 12.3 The Gram Nyayalaya Scheme has been extended for five more years beyond 31.03.2021 i.e. upto 31.03.2026 with financial assistance of Rs.50.00 crores. The funds for the Gram Nyayalayas will henceforth be released only after they have been notified as well as made operational alongwith the appointment of Nyayadhikaris and reported on the Gram Nyayalayas Portal of the Department of Justice. A review of the performance of Gram Nyayalayas was to be done after one year to assess its efficacy as an institution in providing speedy and affordable justice to the rural marginalised and decide on its future. The same is under process.
- 12.4 As on 31st March, 2024, a sum of Rs. 83.40 crore has been sanctioned to States so far which include Rs. 0.80 crore in 2022-23. Details are given below:

Sl. No	Name of the State/UT	Gram Nyayalyas Notified	Gram Nyayalayas operational	Funds sanctioned so far (in Rs. lakh)
1	Madhya Pradesh	89	89	2456.40
2	Rajasthan	45	45	1240.98
3	Kerala	30	30	828.00
4	Maharashtra	36	24	660.80
5	Odisha	24	20	524.40
6	Uttar Pradesh	113	85	1323.20
7	Karnataka	2	2	25.20
8	Haryana	2	2	25.20
9	Punjab	9	2	25.20

10	Jharkhand	6	1	75.60
11	Goa	2	0	25.20
12	Andhra Pradesh	42	0	436.82
13	Telangana	55	0	693.00
14	Jammu & Kashmir	20	0	0.00
15	Ladakh	2	0	0.00
Total		477	300	8340.00

13. DESIGNING INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS FOR HOLISTIC ACCESS TO JUSTICE (DISHA)

The Preamble to the Indian Constitution recognizes Justice as one of the foremost deliverables to be secured for the people of India. Article 39A, enunciated in the Constitution of India, obligates the State to ensure Access to Justice and free legal aid to those deprived due to economic, geographical disparities etc. Access to Justice is recognized as a Fundamental Right under Article 14 and 21 of the Indian Constitution.

Building upon this mandate, Department of Justice (DoJ) has created a new scheme Designing Innovative Solutions and Holistic Access to Justice (DISHA) for a period of five year 2021-2026. To prioritize citizen-centric justice delivery system by integrating access to justice with technology, DISHA has the objective: -

- To strengthen pre-litigation mechanism through **Tele-Law**;
- To develop an effective dispensation of pro bono legal services through **Nyaya Bandhu programme**;
- To empower citizens through pan India **Legal Literacy and Legal Awareness programme**.

14. TELE-LAW: REACHING THE UNREACHED

14.1 Tele-Law: 'Designing Innovative Solutions for Holistic Access to Justice in India' (DISHA)

Department of Justice (DoJ), Ministry of Law and Justice has been implementing a unified Pan-India Central Sector Scheme namely 'Designing Innovative Solutions on Holistic Access to Justice India' (DISHA) that endeavours to provide comprehensive, integrated, technology-based citizen-centric solutions on Access to Justice. Under the Scheme various programmes like Tele-Law, Nyaya Bandhu, and Legal Literacy & Legal Awareness are being mainstreamed in the country.



DISHA aims to supplement and complement the mandate given by the Constitution of India under Articles 14, 21 and 39A, to provide equal justice and free legal aid. DISHA also aims to abide by the statutory requirements of the Legal Services Act, 1987, by giving impetus to the implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 16, especially the aspect of providing access to justice for all.

Tele-Law: Reaching the Unreached

With the wider goal to mainstream legal aid in the society, Department of Justice launched in 2017, Tele-Law: Reaching the Unreached which aims to digitally empower people to seek pre-litigation advice for rightfully claiming their entitlements and for timely redressal of their difficulties. It is an e-interface platform that aims to connect Panel Lawyers stationed at the state/district level with the needy and disadvantaged sections of society seeking legal advice and consultation via video/tele conferencing facilities available at CSCs situated in Gram Panchayats.

Initially piloted in 1800 CSCs in 11 States namely Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, 8 North-East States and Jammu & Kashmir (now a Union Territory), Tele-Law services were further expanded to cover 1,00,000 CSCs/Gram Panchayat in 2022-2023. Presently, Tele-Law is operational in 2,50,000 CSCs/Gram Panchayats in 783 Districts (including 112 Aspirational districts) across 36 States/UTs of the country. A dedicated web portal on Tele-Law (<http://www.tele-law.in/>) is available in 22 regional languages, ensuring its reach to people of various and diversified ethnicities across India. To enable seamless penetration in remote areas, a Tele-Law Mobile application has also been launched to connect beneficiaries seeking legal advice and consultation directly with Panel Lawyers, for availing legal advice and consultation.

Features:

- Advice offered, through Tele-Law, ranges from purely legal matters to cases related to benefits under schemes and other day-to-day matters.
- As on 31st March 2024, there are total 80, 04,749 cases registered, of which advice has been enabled to 79, 08,682 beneficiaries. In the FY-2023-2024 43.51 lakh advice was enabled to the beneficiaries across the country.

Drives to expand Outreach: -

- **Selfie Drive Campaign** - This initiative aims to promote awareness on social media sites, where beneficiaries and field functionaries (VLE & Panel Lawyers) will share their experiences through selfie videos on Tele-Law service. As of 31st October, 2023, total 206 selfies videos were uploaded on Tele Law social media.
- Tele-Law service expanded to cover 2,50,000 CSCs in 765 districts (including 112 Aspirational District) across 36 States/UT in the country.
- Radio jingle campaign was launched on 28th February 2023, this awareness drive aimed to create awareness and sensitize the common masses about Tele-Law Program. Campaign was aired for 30 days (120 spots) and Tele-Law jingle was played in both prime time & non-prime time from 193 radio stations covering all districts in 36 States/UTs.

- **District Level Workshop** - 100 district level workshops were organized across the country by Tele-Law state team, these workshops were attended by 5500+ participants including Village Level Entrepreneur (VLE), Para Legal Volunteer (PLV), government officials and members from SLSAs/DLSAs. Sessions were conducted on Tele-Law implementation, awareness on the Tele-Law scheme and Tele-Law Citizen's mobile application.
- **Special Awareness drive by VLEs:** Initiatives were undertaken by Tele-Law VLEs to conduct special awareness camps in pockets of their region where awareness on Tele-Law is limited or zero awareness. VLEs made special efforts by using various mode of transport such as e-rickshaw, mobile vans, auto-rickshaw, motorcycle, bicycle etc. to spread awareness on Tele-Law. 12000+ citizens participated in the awareness camps.
- Special backlog clearance drive was launched to reach out to 1.5 lakh unattended and pending cases registered under Tele-Law on the Tele-Law Portal from 26th June to 2nd July 2023 where more than 1,05,771 provided by Tele-Law Panel Lawyers.
- **New Radio Jingle campaign** launched (1st August 2023 till 31st August 2023: New Radio Jingle released and aired on All India radio (201 stations), Vivid Bharti (42 station) and FM radio in (29 station).
- Launch of Tele-Law 2.0 (Integration of Tele-Law and Nyaya Bandhu (Pro Bono) Legal Services programme) and milestone achievement of 50 lakh legal advices event was held on 25th August 2023 at Siri fort Auditorium in the presence of Hon'ble Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Law & Justice. During the event the integration of Tele-Law and Nyaya Bandhu services was launched (Tele-Law 2.0), Voices of Beneficiaries (4th edition) and Awardee's Catalogue were released. 12 Frontline functionaries from 6 regions across the country were felicitated by the Hon'ble Minister.
- **Nyaya Sahayak** Program was rolled out in January 2024, where 500 Nyaya Sahayaks were engaged to provide door-to-door legal services across 500 Aspirational blocks in 328 districts in 27 States and 4 UTs.

14.2 **Campaign on 'Hamara Samvidhan, Hamara Samman'** -Commemorating 75th Year of India as a Republic and adoption of India's constitution, Department of Justice launched a pan-India year-long campaign '**Hamara Samvidhan, Hamara Samman**' on 24th January, 2024, at Dr B.R Ambedkar International Centre. The campaign was inaugurated by the Hon'ble Vice-President of India, Shri Jagdeep Dhankhar. The campaign '**Hamara Samvidhan, Hamara Samman**' aims to reaffirm our collective commitment to the principles enshrined in the Constitution of India and celebrate the shared values that bind our nation. This nationwide initiative envisaged to instil a sense of pride and responsibility to uphold the ideals outlined in the constitutional framework. It will also give opportunity to every citizen to participate in various ways, empower them to contribute in meaningful way in our democratic journey.



14.2.i Key themes of the campaign were introduced included Sabko Nyay-Har Ghar Nyaya, Nav Bharat Nav Sankalp, and Vidhi Jagriti Abhiyaan. The Sabko Nyaya-Har Ghar Nyaya sub-campaign aims to cover 2.5 lakh+ Gram Panchayats through Village Level Entrepreneurs (VLEs) of Common Service Centers, encouraging citizens to read Panch Pran Pledge in regional languages. It was highlighted to organize citizen centric-service melas called “Jan Sewa Janta ke Dwar” and conducted workshop on legal services across States/ UTs. Nav Bharat Nav Sankalp involves citizens participating in online activities, such as reading Panch Pran Pledge, quiz on Constitution, poster-making and reel-making competitions. Vidhi Jagriti Abhiyaan focuses on ensuring a steady flow of legal information to citizens through various modes including law students empowering citizens through engaging activities.



14.2.ii. The event also witnessed the release of the DISHA achievement booklet for 2021-2023 and the formalization of collaborations with Bhashini to build multi modal interface to address the legal queries of the citizens in their own language. In addition to the campaign inauguration, this premier event witnessed release of citizen-centric services like Nyaya Setu and partnerships between DoJ with IGNOU and Bhashini.



14.2.iii. 650+ students and faculty of the Pro Bono Law colleges, Tele-Law functionalities from Common Service Centers across the country came together in this event among others.

14.3. First Regional Event at Bikaner, State of Rajasthan-

In continuation of the nation-wide launch of Hamara Samman, first regional event of the Campaign was held at Bikaner Rajasthan. The event was graced by the presence of Hon'ble Dr. Justice D.Y. Chandrachud, Chief Justice of India (CJI), Shri Arjun Ram Meghwal, Hon'ble Union Minister of State (I/C) for Law & Justice, Hon'ble Justice Shri Manindra Mohan Shrivastava, Hon'ble Chief Justice of Rajasthan High Court and Hon'ble Shri Joga Ram Patel, Law Minister, Government of Rajasthan and other high level dignitaries from the State Government of Rajasthan. The event focused on the rolling out of Nyaya Sahyak programme across 500 aspirational blocks in the country. Broacher presenting the role and responsibility of Nyaya Sahayak were also released. Special women edition on voices of beneficiaries under the Tele-Law programme was released by the dignitaries. Awards were distributed to 08 Frontline Functionaries of Tele-Law, who made exemplary efforts in under Nav Bharat Nav Sankalp sub-theme. It also showcased the 'Jan sewa janta ke dwar mela'- an endeavour to bring the legal and welfare schemes of the District, State and Central administration for the citizens under one-roof. 900 participants attended the event including representatives from Bar Association, Judicial officers, Advocates, field level functionaries of Tele-Law program under DISHA scheme, District Administration, Police Officials, Law students and faculties.



14.4 State level Workshops cum Mela under Hamara Samvidhan Hamara Samman campaign: State level workshop cum melas were organized from 21st February 2024 to 28th March 2024 in 25 States and UTs under the sub theme 'Sabko Nyay Har Ghar Nyaya' campaign where citizen centric service stalls were set up by different state department. Tele-Law state booklet and Voices of Beneficiaries 4th edition was launched in the regional languages and Tele-Law awardee were felicitated during the event. More than 15000+ citizens including eminent dignitaries of the concerned state government attended these regional events. The events were followed by a wide promotion on social media and news channels which include both print and digital media which can be estimated to have a reach of more than 65,56,858. Overall, it can be estimated that the campaign reached

more than 84,65,651 people through promotion online and offline. This regional event was an extension of the national year-long campaign titled ‘Hamara Samvidhan Hamara Samman’ launched by Hon’ble Vice- President on 24th January, 2024 at New Delhi.



15. NYAYA BANDHU (PRO BONO LEGAL SERVICES):

Department of Justice aims to inculcate culture for pro bono legal services and built an effective dispensation framework to deliver pro bono legal services. With the aim to create an ecosystem on Pro Bono DoJ has underlined four strategies: -

- 15.1 **Leveraging Technology:** Mobile Application in Android, iOS version has been developed and has been integrated with UMANG platform of MeiTY. Virtual training was provided on the use of Nyaya Bandhu App.
- 15.2 **Pro Bono Panels in High Courts** have been created with support from Registrar Generals of High Courts to provide state specific decentralized pool of Pro Bono Advocates. **22 High Courts** created Pro Bono panels at High Courts **advocates** enrolled through these panels.
- 15.3 **Pro Bono Club Scheme** has been rolled out to instill in the young minds an understanding and philosophy on Pro bono and to assist the registered Pro Bono advocates in researching and legal drafting. **89 Law Schools** have agreed to be the part of the scheme. **19 law schools** were added in the FY 2023-2024.



- 15.4 Fostering Alliances with Start-Ups, CSOs etc.:** In association with **Pro Bono India** -an NGO to provide an integrated platform for legal aid and awareness initiatives, DoJ undertook Students Volunteer Engagement Programme. 43 law students (from different law colleges/ universities) designated as **Pro Bono Associates** provided assistance in research to compile schemes (Central/ State); different amendments/orders/judgments on welfare laws since 2016 onwards; updated directory of important helplines, details of District/ State Legal Service Authorities and vetted DoJ's developed IEC on legal literacy & awareness programme.
- 15.5 Growth:** Total of **10922** advocates from 24 Bar councils have joined the Nyaya Bandhu Programme as on 31st March 2024. **1095** were added in the FY 2023-2024.

16. PAN INDIA LEGAL LITERACY AND LEGAL AWARENESS

- 16.1** Department of Justice has strategized following approaches to address Legal Literacy and Legal Awareness in the country:
- Forging partnerships across Ministries and allied Departments, Institutions, Schools etc.;
 - Facilitating capacity building of existing Grassroot/frontline workers/ volunteers;
 - Leveraging technology for Pan India Legal Literacy and Legal Awareness
- 16.2** Under DISHA scheme, Legal Literacy and Legal Awareness Programme is now expanded at Pan India level. During 2021-24 DoJ has signed MoAs with following 16 agencies and reached out to 15,30,661 beneficiaries. In the FY 2023-2024, the programme had an outreach to 7,35,731 beneficiaries. Two new agencies were onboarded in the year 2023-2024 Dr Ambedkar Government Law College, Puducherry for implementation of Legal Literacy & Legal Awareness Programme with Schools/Colleges and Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi for strengthening Paralegal practice in India
- 16.2.1 Department of Psychiatry, Jawaharlal Nehru Institute of Medical Sciences (JNIMS), Manipur** implemented a project proposal on “Training and Sensitization of Stakeholders on Child Sexual Abuse” (Outreach 2,605)
- 16.2.2 Sikkim State Commission for Women (SSCW)** implemented project on ‘Workshop/Training and Sensitization Programme on Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2013, Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005 and Anti-Human Trafficking’ (Outreach: 1,55,606).
- 16.2.3 Arunachal Pradesh State Legal Services Authority** implemented a project on ‘Synergy between Customary Practices of the Traditional Village Council System and Formal Laws of India’ (Outreach: 6,666).
- 16.2.4 Centre for Community Economics and Development Consultants Society, Jaipur, Rajasthan** implemented legal awareness Project to ensure dignity of women, children and elders in 5 aspirational districts of Rajasthan – Jaisalmer, Baran, Karauli, Dholpur and Sirohi. (Outreach: 58,990)
- 16.2.5 The Law Research Institute, Eastern Region, Gauhati High Court, Guwahati** is implementing a research project titled ‘Documentation of Customary Laws of the North Eastern Region, India’ (Outreach: 304)

- 16.2.6 National Law Institute University, Bhopal** is implementing a national level ‘Digital Legal Literacy – Design, Development, Management and Testing – e Nyayaganga Project.’ (Outreach: 6,173)
- 16.2.7 National Law School of India University, Bengaluru** is implementing a national level project titled ‘Digital Legal Literacy-Dissemination and Assessment’. (Outreach: 4,33,804)
- 16.2.8 National Law University, New Delhi** is implementing a project titled ‘Adhikaron Ka Gyan Unnati Ki Pahchaan’ in Uttar Pradesh. (Outreach: 1,613)
- 16.2.9 Shadow Advertising and Communications Pvt. Ltd., Bhubaneswar** is implementing a project on ‘Innovative Legal Literacy and Legal Awareness Programme in Odisha’. (Outreach: 3,61,702)
- 16.2.10 Abdul Nazir Sab State Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Mysuru, Karnataka** is implementing a project on capacity building of Panchayati Raj Functionaries of Karnataka. (Outreach: 33,836)
- 16.2.11 State Institute for Rural Development, Pune, Maharashtra** is implementing a project on promotion of VIDHI Doots in Maharashtra’s 100 Gram Panchayats. (Outreach: 2,365)
- 16.2.12 Bihar Institute of Public Administration and Rural Development (BIPARD), Patna** is promoting 700 VIDHI Mitras in Gram Panchayats of Bihar. (Outreach: 1,024)
- 16.2.13 Meghalaya State Legal Services Authorities, Shillong, Meghalaya** is working on Community Mediation in Meghalaya. (Outreach: 1,599)
- 16.2.14 Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi** is implementing a national level project on ‘Monitoring and Evaluation of Legal Literacy and Legal Awareness Projects’
- 16.2.15 DoJ signed MoA with Dr Ambedkar Government Law College, Puducherry** for implementation of Legal Literacy & Legal Awareness Programme with Schools/Colleges. (Outreach: 900)
- 16.2.16 DoJ signed MoU with Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi** for strengthening Paralegal practice in India (Outreach: 630)

16.3 Webinar Series:

COVID-19 Pandemic and lockdowns emerged as big challenge in conducting community level legal awareness and outreach activities. Hence, virtual medium and social media platforms were used in reaching out to front line functionaries through series of Legal Awareness Webinars. From September 2021 to October, 2023, twenty thematic legal awareness webinars were organized on national level socio-legal issues and reached out to 4.62 lakh beneficiaries. In the year FY 2023-2024 a total of 4 webinars were organized which reached out to 75,700+ viewers. The topics on which the webinars were conducted include Child labour in India, Rehabilitation of Acid Attack Survivors, Labour Laws and Child Sexual Abuse.



17. Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav: Intensive People-Centric Outreach

Joining the celebration on Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav, intensive people-centric outreach has been undertaken. Details of the various initiatives are as under: -

17.1 Celebration of International Day of Yoga (IDY), 2023

The theme for this year IDY 2023 was “Yoga For Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam” as it depicts Yoga for the welfare of all in the form of ‘One World-One Family’. Yoga has brought people together through compassion, kindness, fostered a sense of unity and built resilience among people world over. The Department of Justice, Ministry of Law and Justice, Government of India celebrated the International Day of Yoga (IDY) at its premises in Jaisalmer House on the 21.06.2023. All the senior Officers/ staff of the Department participated in the event.

IDY, 2023 was also observed in close coordination with Judiciary at an unprecedented scale throughout the country at iconic buildings with unique architecture. Over 30,000 members from Judiciary including Hon’ble Judges of SC, HCs and District and Subordinate Courts with staff members and members of the Bar at various locations participated in the event.

17.2 Har Ghar Tiranga Abhiyan, 2023

The Department of Justice participated in the Har Ghar Tiranga Abhiyan observed from 13th-15th August, 2023 to inculcate the values of equity, justice, peace and pays tribute to the martyrs in honour of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav. The Abhiyan was also observed by Judiciary at an unprecedented scale throughout the country with participation of Hon’ble Judges of Supreme Court, High Courts and District and Subordinate Courts with staff members by unfurling the National Flag at their residences and respective office buildings.

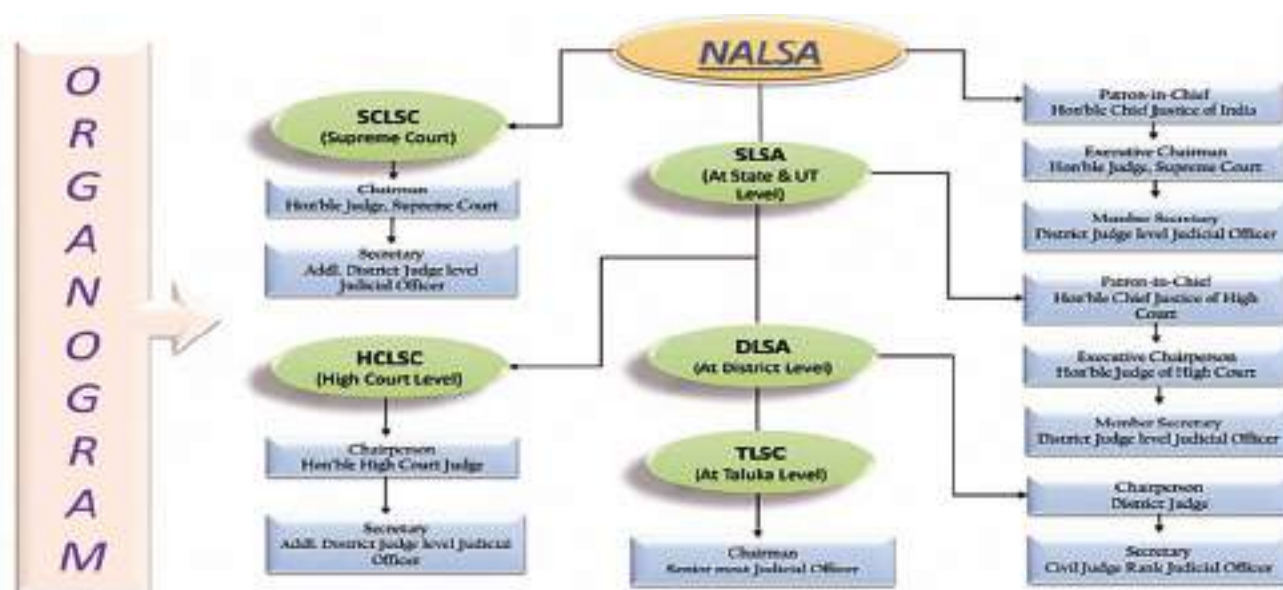
17.3 Vigilance Awareness Week, 2023 (30.10.2023 to 05.11.2023)

Vigilance Awareness Week, 2023 was celebrated in the Department from 30.10.2023 to 05.11.2023. The Integrity Pledge was taken by all the Officers/staff of the Department of Justice including its grantee bodies i.e. National Legal Services Authority and National Judicial Academy on 30.10.2023. Immediately after the Pledge taking ceremony on 30.10.2023, the Secretary, Department of Justice addressed the gathering about the necessity of Vigilance awareness activities. An essay competition on the subject of ‘Corruption Free India for a Developed Nation’ has been conducted by the Department of Justice on 03.11.2023.

18. NATIONAL LEGAL SERVICES AUTHORITY:

- 18.1 Article 39 A of the Indian Constitution provides for free legal aid in order to ensure that opportunities for securing justice are not denied to any citizen by reason of economic or other disabilities. Articles 14 and 22 (1) mandates the state to ensure equality before law. In the year 1987, the Legal Services Authorities Act was enacted by the Parliament which came into force on 9th November, 1995 to establish a nationwide uniform network for providing free and competent legal services to the weaker sections of the society on the basis of equal opportunity. The National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) has been constituted under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 to monitor and evaluate implementation of legal aid programmes and to lay down policies and principles for making legal services available under the Act.

The organogram of the Legal Services Authorities is shown below:



18.2 Regional Conferences



NALSA convened a series of four Regional Conferences spread zone-wise across India as a crucial step in ensuring equal access to justice for all. The Conference's central theme, "Enhancing Access to Justice," emphasized NALSA's dedication to make legal aid effective and accessible for all facets of society.



DATE	ZONE	VENUE
21 st January, 2023	North Zone	Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh)
4 th March, 2023	West Zone	Udaipur (Rajasthan)
18 th March, 2023	East Zone	Shillong (Meghalaya)
8 th April, 2023	South Zone	Mysore (Karnataka)

These Regional Conferences marked a collective effort to foster dialogue and cooperation among legal luminaries, policymakers, and stakeholders. The central discussions revolved around five pivotal agendas:

1. Evolving Legal Aid Services within the Judicial Framework
2. Fostering Alternative Dispute Resolution and the Essence of LokAdalats
3. Seamless Integration of Digital Technology for Enhanced Justice Access
4. Amplifying NALSA Schemes, Legal Awareness, and Outreach
5. Discovering Challenges and Exchanging Best Practices



18.3 19th All India Legal Services Authorities Meet:

Every Year NALSA organizes All India Meet of SLSAs to deliberate upon and finalize the future course of action and also to evaluate the implementation of various legal aid schemes/ programmes launched in previous years. This year the 19th All India Meet was organized by the Jammu & Kashmir Legal Services Authority under the aegis of NALSA on 30th June and 1st July, 2023 in Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir.



During the Meet, discussions focused on the future course of action for Legal Services Authorities, setting targets, addressing various challenges, and implementing steps to strengthen and streamline legal aid programs in the country. The meeting included sessions on, strengthening the National Legal Aid Helpline - 15100 & NALSA's digital platform, Legal Aid for under trial prisoners, court-based legal aid including the Legal Aid Defense Counsel System (LADCS), legal empowerment and Eco-Justice.

18.4 Conference of Member Secretaries, SLSAs

NALSA organised the conference of Member Secretaries of State Legal Services Authorities on 15th September, 2023 at New Delhi. The sessions of the conference were on the following topics:

- Treasury Single Account Module (TSA) of the PFMS and to address the issues – Issues in the working and its redressal.
- LADCS – Status of Implementation, Challenges and finding solutions
- Audit of Statement of Accounts in terms of Rule 237 of GFR 2017, and submission of Utilization Certificate.
- Follow-up action on the resolution passed in 19th All India Meet of Legal Services Institution held on 30th June & 1st July 2023 at Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir.

18.5 Under Trial Review Committee Special Campaign - 2023

NALSA under the guidance of Hon'ble Mr. Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul, Judge, Supreme Court of India & Executive Chairperson, NALSA, launched the 'Under Trial Review Committee Special Campaign 2023' from 18th September, 2023 to 20th November, 2023. The Campaign aimed to accelerate the regular functioning of the Under Trial Review Committees (UTRCs) and review of all eligible Under Trial Prisoners (UTPs). This would expedite the identification and review of prisoners who are eligible to be considered for release as per the NALSA's Standing Operating Procedure (SOP) for UTRCs.

18.6 Commemoration of Legal Services Day - 2023

The Legal Services Day was celebrated by NALSA on 9th November, 2023. On this occasion, Hon'ble the Chief Justice of India and Patron-in-Chief, NALSA launched the upgraded "National Toll-Free Helpline Number 15100 of NALSA through IVRS Technology", and NCW's Mobile Application "Her Legal Guide".

18.7 The 1st Regional Conference on Access to Legal Aid: Strengthening Access to Justice in the Global South

NALSA, with the support of Department of Justice, Government of India, along with International Legal Foundation (ILF), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) organized the 1st Regional Conference on "Access to Legal Aid: Strengthening Access to Justice in the Global South" at New Delhi, India on November 27 & 28, 2023. The participants of the Conference comprised of representatives from 40 Africa-Asia-Pacific countries of the Global South. This included Hon'ble Chief Justices; Hon'ble Law Ministers; Heads of the national legal aid institutions/ authorities/ services; and experts from academia/civil society.



Over the course of two days, a total of 16 sessions were conducted on various themes to enable focused and strategic deliberations on specific needs of the participating countries on access to justice and access to Legal Aid. A Ministerial Roundtable and Chief Justices Roundtable on Access to Justice as a Sustainable Development Goal were also held during the conference and an Outcome Document was thereafter released. The Conference showcased India's 'Access to Justice' framework as a model in providing universal access to legal aid and for advancing 'Ease of Justice' for the Global South Countries.



18.8 State Level Conference of District Legal Services Authorities (DLSAs) of Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka and Rajasthan

Hon'ble Mr. Justice Sanjiv Khanna, Judge, Supreme Court of India & Executive Chairman, NALSA chaired the first ever State Level Conference of DLSAs of Madhya Pradesh on 13.01.2024 at Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh. This conference was attended by the Member Secretary, M.P. SLSA, Chairman, and Secretaries of DLSAs. The Conference agenda was to discuss the ground level challenges, concerns, solutions, and feedback.

Karnataka State Legal Services Authority (KSLSA) organized a State Conference of DLSAs under the aegis of NALSA on 24.03.2024. The Conference provided a platform for the integration of the knowledge triangle i.e. integration of inputs and perspectives of District Legal Services Authorities, KSLSA and NALSA.

High Court of Rajasthan in collaboration with the Rajasthan State Legal Services Authority (RSLSA) organized a One Day Colloquium on "Legal Aid & Social Justice, Challenges & Opportunities in Access to Justice" on 30th March, 2024, at Jaipur, as a part of the Platinum Jubilee Celebrations of High Court of Rajasthan. The programme witnessed the launch of 2 books and a Chat Bot of RSLSA. This Colloquium was followed by the Rajasthan State Conference of DLSAs, organised by RSLSA under the aegis of NALSA.

18.9 RESTORING THE YOUTH : Pan-India Campaign for identifying Juveniles in Prisons and rendering Legal Assistance – 2024

Hon'ble Mr. Justice Sanjiv Khanna, Judge, Supreme Court of India & Executive Chairman, NALSA on the eve of 75th Republic Day i.e. on 25th January, 2024 launched a Pan-India Campaign – "Restoring the Youth: Pan-India Campaign for Identifying Juveniles in Prisons and Rendering Legal Assistance – 2024" conducted from 25th January, 2024 to 27th February, 2024.

The virtual launch event was attended by Executive Chairpersons, Member Secretaries and other officials from all State Legal Services Authorities. This Campaign aimed to identify prisoners who were potentially minors at the time of the offence, assisting them in filing necessary applications for claiming juvenility before the concerned court and facilitating their transfer to Child Care Institutions in identified cases.

18.10 National Lok Adalats

Legal Services Institutions under the aegis of NALSA organize four National Lok Adalats every year. These Lok Adalats are organized to further the objective of 'Speedy and Effective Justice'. In Lok Adalats, various cases such as Criminal Compoundable Cases, Revenue Cases and Bank Recovery Cases, Motor Accident Claims, Matrimonial Disputes, Cheque Bounce Cases under the Negotiable Instrument Act, Labour Disputes, and other Civil Cases are taken up.

A brief overview of the National Lok Adalats organized during 01.01.2023 to 31.03.2024 is provided below:

Dated	Pre-Litigation				Pending Cases				Total		
	Taken Up	Disposal	Total Settlement amount (in Rs.)		Taken Up	Disposal	Total Settlement amount (in Rs.)		Taken Up	Disposal	Total Settlement amount (in Rs.)
11.02.2023	32713845	17604677	27485393280		5990139	3057454	126759049411		38703984	20662131	154244442691
13.05.2023	24447578	15632501	30733933185		5981543	3381576	116631049862		30429121	19014077	147364983047
09.09.2023	24190061	16251374	35836516957		6726729	4244195	107635067176		30916790	20495569	143471584133
09.12.2023	33102853	17889355	43728738522		5333468	2969514	113904291867		38436321	20858869	157633030389

18.11 Persons benefitted through Legal Services

Free Legal Aid Services are provided by the Legal Services Authorities to poor and marginalised sections of the society covered under Section 12 of the Legal Services Authorities Act 1987. Following is the data relating to the number of beneficiaries belonging to different strata of the society availing the free Legal Aid Services during April 2023 to March 2024:

Statement showing the number of persons benefited through Legal Services provided under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 during the period from April, 2023 to March, 2024.

S. No.	SLSAs	SC	ST	Women	Children	In custody	Persons with Disability	Industrial Workmen	Trans-gender	Victim of Trafficking in Human beings or Begar	Victims of Mass Disaster Violence, Flood, Draught, Earthquake and Industrial Disaster	General (whose annual income does not exceed the prescribed limit)	Others	Total
1	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	0	0	42	0	64	8	0	0	0	0	14	92	220
2	Andhra Pradesh	318	75	983	61	2220	24	1	1	0	0	1128	3454	8265
3	Arunachal Pradesh	628	2006	1453	84	1440	4	17	0	0	0	41	23	5696
4	Assam	1254	3098	6168	2366	17711	188	1286	1	2	813	8922	21940	63749
5	Bihar	7306	1270	15307	6889	34778	163	429	21	0	549	2575	82126	151413
6	Chhattisgarh	6884	12701	9621	544	14601	10	12	1	5	21	8489	9275	62164
7	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	2	6	21	0	15	0	11	0	0	0	0	0	55
8	Daman & Diu	4	2	14	1	7	0	2	0	0	0	4	0	34
9	Delhi	1705	16	22631	2761	24794	342	1538	13	912	32940	12984	21246	121882
10	Goa	6	4	790	4	232	38	0	0	0	0	480	4	1558
11	Gujarat	3825	2716	11560	565	10184	123	101	0	3	62	7981	3449	40569
12	Haryana	1568	0	7818	468	35367	137	7	3	0	26611	3151	1733	76863
13	Himachal Pradesh	547	143	3195	90	725	81	0	8	13	553	897	1094	7346
14	Jammu & Kashmir	757	398	4082	510	1184	145	1	3	0	32	2759	1525	11396
15	Jharkhand	21387	27451	47687	14730	19352	770	5266	664	34	59	2534	129369	269303
16	Karnataka	6751	3876	11955	932	8647	340	314	39	2	0	3210	17340	53406
17	Kerala	2789	441	15812	3899	5653	225	137	54	85	49	5822	1532	36498
18	Lakshadweep	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
19	Madhya Pradesh	30163	25563	41291	19955	58171	1444	1110	0	1	5	20759	27048	225510
20	Maharashtra	2298	635	17566	964	20687	287	158	52	389	17	5823	4880	53756

Statement showing the number of persons benefited through Legal Services provided under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 during the period from April, 2023 to March, 2024.

S. No.	SLSAs	SC	ST	Women	Children	In custody	Persons with Disability	Industrial Workmen	Trans-gender	Victim of Trafficking in Human beings or Begar	Victims of Mass Disasters, Violence, Flood, Draught, Earthquake and Industrial Disaster	General (whose annual income does not exceed the prescribed limit)	Others	Total
21	Manipur	751	8585	7621	2487	282	129	17	26	686	38304	2881	866	62635
22	Meghalaya	27	716	490	68	865	0	0	0	0	3	81	121	2371
23	Mizoram	4	2528	537	62	599	218	0	0	0	0	62	791	4801
24	Nagaland	373	2342	557	137	628	56	0	0	0	0	510	0	4603
25	Odisha	1375	1073	3264	39	4473	6020	15	100	11	4	1967	948	19289
26	Puducherry	26	0	181	256	71	0	1	0	0	0	49	37	621
27	Punjab	5287	28	13714	419	24764	243	101	6	1	447	9968	5383	60361
28	Rajasthan	333	132	1337	6274	11000	19	36	0	0	0	938	221	20290
29	Sikkim	32	118	553	18	218	2	0	0	0	0	127	6	1074
30	Tamil Nadu	1881	782	10962	178	8989	135	90	6	11	32	7186	14928	45180
31	Telangana	131	66	2066	334	4258	12	0	0	0	0	3198	3128	13193
32	Tripura	795	831	3732	286	1115	41	0	38	24	0	1610	1492	9964
33	U. T. Chandigarh	15	0	1355	238	418	8	0	1	0	0	692	95	2822
34	Uttar Pradesh	2776	83	2487	1654	7328	231	89	251	0	1	4964	9215	29079
35	Uttarakhand	626	215	2358	846	14701	47	49	2	0	32	1570	893	21339
36	West Bengal	5020	2590	14423	1404	18383	101	111	18	69	7	18516	1712	62354
37	Ladakh	29	333	105	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	35	505
	Total	107673	100823	283738	69526	353924	11591	10899	1308	2248	100541	141892	366001	1550164

19. SECOND NATIONAL JUDICIAL PAY COMMISSION (SNJPC):

In compliance to the order of Hon'ble Supreme Court of India, a fresh National Judicial Pay Commission, to be known as Second National Judicial Pay Commission (SNJPC), headed by Shri Justice (Retd.) P.Venkatrama Reddi, former Judge of Supreme Court of India was appointed vide Notification dated 16.11.2017 to review the pay scales, emoluments and service conditions of the Judicial Officers of Subordinate Judiciary in India.

2. The report submitted by the SNJPC, the Hon'ble Court vide order dated 27.07.2022 accepted all the recommendations of SNJPC on the revised pay structure. This Hon'ble Court ordered that the pay structure as recommended by SNJPC shall be accepted and the revised pay scales would be effective from 01.01.2016. It was further directed by this Hon'ble Court that in so far as arrears are concerned, 25% of arrears would be payable in cash within a period of 3 months. Another 25% to be paid in cash within 3 months thereafter and the balance 50% was to be paid on or before the end of June, 2023. Hon'ble Court vide order dated 19.05.2023 also accepted the recommendations of SNJPC on pension and other retirement benefits of Judicial Officers and directed that all arrears of pay be cleared by 30.06.2023. It was further directed that the payment of arrears of pension, additional pension, gratuity and other retiral benefits be paid by 31.08.2023, another 25% by 31.10.2023, and the remaining 50% by 31.12.2023.

3. Department of Justice implemented the recommendations of the SNJPC in respect of Judicial Officers of the Union Territories, in consultation with Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance and convey the sanction of the Central Government to the Union Territories of J&K, Delhi and Puducherry for fixation of pay and pension of serving and retired Judicial Officers in the revised pay scales as directed by Hon'ble Supreme Court of India's order dated 27.7.2022 and 19.05.2023 vide order dated 08.08.2023. The remaining Union Territories have no cadre of Judicial Officers of their own and all the Judicial Officers posted in these Union Territories are taken on deputation from the respective neighboring state.

4. Supreme Court of India vide order dated 23.11.2023 stated that based on the outer limit of 31st January 2024, all High Courts shall ensure compliance with the directions contained in the judgment dated 19 May 2023, as noted above by 31st December 2023, the High Courts shall, within the aforesaid time frame, communicate the proposed amendments to the rules to the State Governments/UTs, and the State Governments/UTs shall notify the rules by 31st January 2024.

5. Department of Justice conveyed the sanction of the Central Government to the Union Territories of J&K, Delhi and Puducherry for fixation of pay and pension of serving and retired Judicial Officers in the revised pay scales as directed by Hon'ble Supreme Court of India's order dated 27.7.2022 and 19.05.2023 vide order dated 08.08.2023. Department of Justice has requested Government of UT of J&K, Delhi and Puducherry to take necessary action in compliance of Hon'ble Supreme Court's order dated 23.11.2023.

6. Supreme Court of India vide order dated 04.01.2024 directed to implement various allowances of Judicial Officers of states and UTs. The matter is under consideration in consultation with Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance.

20. MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MoUs) SIGNED WITH OTHER COUNTRIES IN THE FIELD OF JUDICIAL CO-OPERATION

Department of Justice has signed Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) with nine countries in the field

of Judicial Co-operation as well as training and capacity building programmes for Judicial Officers. The latest MoU has been signed with Government of Singapore in the field of Judicial Co-operation on 07.09.2023.

21. REDRESSAL OF GRIEVANCES:

Department of Justice (DoJ) receives large number of Citizen's grievances from citizens directly and through online CPGRAMS Portal. 18077 grievances were received from 1.1.2023 to 31.03.2024, out of which 17866 grievances were disposed off till date.

22. Vision @2047 on the Judicial System of India – National Stakeholders Consultation

In order to mark the centenary of India's independence, efforts are being undertaken by the Sectoral Group of Secretaries (SGoS), Government of India to develop "Vision India@2047" for various sectors like infrastructure, resources, social & welfare, defence, governance etc. to provide a vision document on reforms for the next 25 years which would project India as a world leader in the respective spheres.

Under the SGoS-09 on Governance, Department of Justice is preparing the Vision India@2047 for the legal and judicial system of India. A series of consultations were chaired by Secretary (Justice), with Law Students, Advocates, members from various Bar councils, and representatives of Civil Society Organization (CSOs), legal start-ups etc. to brainstorm innovative and transformative ideas and from the participants for incorporation in the Vision@2047 document. Consequently, Department of Justice has selected core areas such as driving legal reforms for Ease of Doing Business for expediting commercial dispute resolution, leveraging technology for Ease of Justice through e-Courts and universalising Access to Justice through strengthening of pre and post litigation legal aid and advice services for smooth and effective justice delivery and legal services to citizens.

23. MISCELLANEOUS ACTIVITIES OF THE DEPARTMENT:

23.1 RIGHT TO INFORMATION ACT, 2005:

Under the provisions of the Right to Information Act, 2005, Department of Justice has initiated the following actions:

- (a) An Section Officer of the Department has been designated as CAPIO to collect and transfer the applications under the RTI Act, 2005 to the Central Public Information Officers / Public Authorities concerned and to submit the quarterly returns, regarding receipt and disposal of the RTI applications / appeals, to the Central Information Commission.
- (b) Details of the Department's functions along with its functionaries have been placed on the RTI portal of the Department's official website (<http://doj.gov.in>) as required under section 5 (i) of RTI Act, 2005 in respect of subjects being handled by them.
- (c) The Under Secretaries / Section Officers, in accordance with subjects allocated, have been designed as Central Public Information Officers (CPIOs) under section 5 (i) of RTI Act, 2005.
- (d) Directors / Deputy Secretary / Under Secretary Level Officers have been designated as Appellate Authorities in terms of section 19 (i) of RTI Act, 2005 in respect of Under Secretaries / Section Officers working for the allocated subjects.

- (e) During the year 2023-24 (01.01.2023) to (31.03.2024), 444 RTI applications and 11 Appeals were received manually and 5312 RTI Applications and 149 appeals were received online in the Department and forwarded to the concerned CPIOs / Public Authorities for providing information requested for.
- (f) As per para 1.4.1 of the DOPTs guidelines issued vide their O.M. No. 1/5/2011 – IR Dated 15.04.2013, the Department is uploading all RTI's and Appeal's replies on the website regularly.

The details of total number of RTI applications received during 2023 are as follows:-

Matter	Online	Offline
RTI	5312	444
Appeal	149	11

23.2 EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN:

Redressal of Complaints pertaining to Sexual Harassment at Workplace: In compliance of Section 4(1) of Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013, an Internal Complaints Committee has been re-constituted for redressal of complaints by aggrieved women employees of the Department on 20.09.2023. The Committee consists of three women employees, (including one Member from an NGO) and two male employees.

23.3 SWACHH BHARAT ABHIYAN:



As per policy guidelines of Government of India, *Swachh Bharat* programme has been implemented in the Department. During the year 2023-24, '*Swachhta Pakhwada*' was observed from 01.04.2023 to 15.04.2023 and another programme namely '*Swachhta Hi Sewa*' was observed and activities like beautification of lawn, plantation of trees inside campus, extensive cleaning drive, weeding out of old records, disposal of old and obsolete items and voluntary *Shramdaan* by officers/officials of Department of Justice etc. were undertaken. During the FY 2023-24, Rs. 61.30 lakh was earmarked for works under *Swachhta* Action Plan for maintenance of the office premises. An expenditure of Rs. 60.87 lakh was incurred on this (upto 31.03.2024).

23.4 IMPLEMENTATION OF E-OFFICE:

In keeping with the policies of the Government for moving towards paperless office, this Department has taken the initiative to operationalize eOffice. Special steps have been taken with the help of NIC to impart training to all officers/officials on eOffice for smooth implementation and optimal utilization of eOffice system. As a result, Department of Justice is one of the top performing Ministries/Departments of Government of India who have moved into complete eOffice platform. For seamless flow of data between the all the Ministries/Departments of the Government of India, Department of Justice has already migrated to version 7.0 of efile (eOffice).

24. IMPLEMENTATION OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGE POLICY:

Official Language Section has been set up in the Department. It assists in discharging the responsibilities of implementation of Official Language policy of Union of India, the Official Languages Act, 1963, the Official Language Rules, 1976 and the compliance of directions/instructions issued by Department of Official Languages from time to time. It is also entrusted with the work of promoting the progressive use of Hindi in the Department in addition to the translation work. The progress made in the implementation of official language is monitored through Quarterly Meetings. In the year 2023, the meetings of Departmental Official Language Implementation Committee (OLIC) were held in every quarter to review the implementation of progressive use of Hindi in the Department. For promoting the use of Hindi in the Department, a scheme related to noting and drafting is being implemented. Under the scheme of Noting and Drafting, a 05-day workshop was organized for officials of Department of Justice in collaboration with Central Translation Bureau (CTB), in which certificates were given to the participants. One Hindi workshop was organized in every quarter during the year.

Apart from organizing workshops and quarterly meetings, a Desk training on newly developed Translation Software, "*Kanthasth 2.0*" was given to 30 Officers/Staff of Department of Justice to enable and encourage them to translate the documents using this tool.

24.1 HINDI FORTNIGHT AND HINDI DIWAS:

In order to promote and encourage the implementation of Official Language in the Department, Hindi Diwas was organized on 30th September, 2023. On the occasion of Hindi Diwas, message of Hon'ble Minister of Home Affairs was read out in the presence of Secretary (Justice). In his address, Secretary (Justice) urged the officers and officials of the Department to do their maximum work in Hindi. In addition to this, Hindi Fortnight was organized in the Department from 14th September, 2023 to 29th September, 2023. During observance of Hindi Fortnight, six competitions i.e. Hindi Essay, Hindi Translation, Reciting Hindi Poems, Hindi Typing, Hindi Dictation and Hindi Extempore

were organized. A total of **89** officers/officials participated in these competitions. Cash prizes (First: Rs. 3,000/-, Second: Rs. 2,500/- and Third: Rs.1500/- and **five incentive prizes Rs. 1,000/-** along with certificates were given away to the winners of each competition.



25. ASPECIAL CAMPAIGN 2.0

A Special Campaign for reduction of pendency and efficient management of space was conducted from 2nd October, 2023 to 31st October, 2023. National Legal Services Authority of India and National Judicial Academy were also brought under the Campaign for Space management purpose. In pendency clearance silo of the Campaign, in respect of all pendency under the categories of References from MPs, Parliamentary Assurances, Public Grievances and references from State Governments were cleared.

26. STATUS OF CAG PARA

There is no CAG/PAC para pending in Department of Justice.

CHAPTER - III

DEPARTMENT OF LEGAL AFFAIRS

1. FUNCTIONS AND ORGANISATIONAL SET UP

1.1 The Department has been allocated the following subject as per the Government of India (Allocation of Business) Rules, 1961:-

1. Advice to Ministries on legal matters including interpretation of the Constitution and the laws, conveyancing and engagement of counsel to appear on behalf of the Union of India in the High Courts and subordinate courts where the Union of India is a party.
2. Attorney General of India, Solicitor General of India, and other Central Government law officers of the States whose services are shared by the Ministries of the Government of India.
3. Conduct of cases in the Supreme Court and the High Courts on behalf of the Central Government and on behalf of the Governments of States participating in the Central Agency Scheme.
4. Reciprocal arrangements with foreign countries for the service of summons in civil suits for the execution of decrees of Civil Courts, for the enforcement of maintenance orders, and for the administration of the estates of foreigners dying in India intestate.
5. Authorization of officers to execute contracts and assurances of property on behalf of the President under Article 299(1) of the Constitution, and authorization of officers to sign and verify complaints or written statements in suits by or against the Central Government.
6. Indian Legal Service.
7. Treaties and agreements with foreign countries in matters of civil law.
8. Law Commission.
9. Legal Profession including the Advocates Act, 1961 (25 of 1961) and persons entitled to practice before High Courts.
10. Enlargement of the jurisdiction of Supreme Court and the conferring thereon of further powers; persons entitled to practice before the Supreme Court, references to the Supreme Court under Article 143 of the Constitution of India.
11. Administration of the Notaries Act, 1952 (53 of 1952)
12. Income-tax Appellate Tribunal.

The Department has also been allocated administration of the following Acts:-

- (a) The Advocates Act, 1961
- (b) The Notaries Act, 1952

- (c) The Advocates' Welfare Fund Act, 2001
- (d) The Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996
- (e) The Commercial Courts Act, 2015 and
- (f) The India International Arbitration Centre Act, 2019.

1.2 The Department is also administratively in-charge of the Income Tax Appellate Tribunal, the Law Commission of India and the India International Arbitration Centre. The Department is also administratively concerned with all the matters relating to the Indian Legal Service. It is further connected with the appointment of Law Officers namely the Attorney General of India, the Solicitor General of India and the Additional Solicitor Generals of India. With a view to promote studies and research in law and for improvement in legal profession, the Department sanctions grant-in-aid to certain institutions engaged in these fields like Indian Law Institute.

2. ORGANISATIONAL SET-UP

The Department of Legal Affairs has a two-tier set up, namely, the Main Secretariat at New Delhi and the Branch Secretariats at Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai and Bengaluru. The nature of duties discharged by the Department can be broadly classified into two areas- Advice work and Litigation work. The Organisational Chart of the Department of Legal Affairs is at **ANNEXURE-I**.

2.1 Main Secretariat:

- i. The set up at the Main Secretariat includes Law Secretary, Additional Secretaries, Joint Secretaries and Legal Advisers and other Legal Advisers at various levels. The work relating to tendering of legal advice and conveyancing has been distributed amongst groups of officers. Each group is normally headed by an Additional Secretary or a Joint Secretary & Legal Adviser, who, in turn, is assisted by a number of other Legal Advisers at different levels.
- ii. The litigation work in the Supreme Court on behalf of all the Ministries/Departments of the Government of India and some administrations of the Union Territories is handled by the Central Agency Section, presently headed by an officer of the rank of Additional Secretary who is assisted by Officers of Government Advocates cadre of the ILS and other supporting staff.
- iii. The litigation work in the High Court of Delhi and CAT (Principal Bench) on behalf of all the Ministries/Departments of the Government of India is processed by the Litigation (High Court) Section, presently headed by a Deputy Legal Adviser.
- iv. The litigation work in the Subordinate Courts in Delhi is handled by the Litigation (Lower Court) Section, presently headed by an Assistant Legal Adviser.
- v. The Department has a special cell, namely, Implementation Cell for dealing with the implementation of the recommendations of the Law Commission of India and the administration of the Advocates Act, 1961 and the Advocates Welfare Fund Act, 2015. It also deals with the legal profession.
- vi. There is one post of Joint Secretary & Legal Adviser each in Railway Board and Department of Telecommunications respectively. However, presently the work relating to these two

organisations is being handled at Additional Secretary level. Apart from these, the Officers of the Indian Legal Service are also posted in the Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, SFIO, Department of Space, Staff Selection Commission, Enforcement Directorate, Narcotics Control Bureau, Delhi Police, Department of Personnel and Training, Intelligence Bureau, NATGRID, NTRO and CBI.

2.2 Creation of ILS:

With the development of the society the legal profession underwent a metamorphosis and several attempts have been made for proper dispensation of justice and to cater to the legal needs of the society. One such attempt made in 1956 to cater to the needs of the Government qualitatively is creation of Central Legal Service (the forerunner of the present Indian Legal Service). The Government of India in the Ministry of Law and Justice established the Indian Legal Service under the Indian Legal Service Rules, 1957, which came into force on the 1st October 1957. Since inception, the officers of the Indian Legal Service have been rendering dedicated service to the nation by giving legal advice in important matters to various Ministries/Departments of the Government of India and drafting bills and ordinances which are introduced in the Parliament. This service has given Governors to States, Secretary General to the Houses of Parliament, Chief Election Commissioner and Election Commissioners, Judges to High Courts and Judicial Members to various Tribunals like CAT, ITAT, DRT etc. and an Information Commissioner.

2.3 Role of ILS:

The officers of the Indian Legal Service (ILS) manning the Department of Legal Affairs and Legislative Department which are the principal legal organs of the Government of India, have risen to the challenges and performed at optimum levels. The digital revolution has changed the dynamics of information sharing and the economy has provided for new areas of wealth creation. Law and justice delivery systems are not untouched by such changes. This necessitates the ILS officers to update the legal skill and acumen to cater to emerging legal needs. They being the Principal Legal Advisers to the Government have responded effectively and speedily to the demands made upon them by the various organs of the Government and play a pivotal role in both advisory as well as in drafting work.

3. ADVICE SECTIONS

- 3.1 There are three Advice Sections in the Department of Legal Affairs, namely, Advice A, Advice B and Advice C. The Advice A and Advice B Sections facilitate the movement of files relating to the requests for advice received from various Ministries/Departments for legal opinion. The requests received for legal advice are placed before the concerned group heads to whom a particular Ministry/Department has been allocated to. To make the functioning more convenient, the various Ministries/Departments of the Government of India are distributed between Advice A and Advice B Sections:

(A) The following Ministries/Departments/Organisations are dealt by Advice 'A' Section:

1. Ministry of Home Affairs
2. Ministry of External Affairs
3. Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions

4. Ministry of Defence
5. Ministry of Road Transport & Highways
6. Ministry of Labour and Employment
7. Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilizers
8. Ministry of Steel
9. Ministry of Mines
10. Department of Justice
11. Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment
12. Ministry of Coal
13. Ministry of Communications
14. Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship
15. Development of North Eastern Region
16. Union Public Service Commission
17. Staff Selection Commission
18. Central Information Commission
19. Ministry of Shipping
20. Ministry of Civil Aviation
21. Ministry of Tribal Affairs
22. Ministry of Minority Affairs
23. Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas
24. Ministry of Tourism
25. Election Commission of India
26. Central Vigilance Commission
27. Conveyancing matters including house building advance cases of all the Ministries and Departments.

(B) The following Ministries/Departments/Organisations are dealt by Advice 'B' Section:

1. Ministry of Finance
2. Ministry of Corporate Affairs
3. Ministry of Heavy Industry & Public Enterprises
4. Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises
5. Ministry of Railways
6. Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs
7. Ministry of Commerce & Industry
8. Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs
9. Lok Sabha Secretariat

10. Rajya Sabha Secretariat
11. President Secretariat
12. Prime Minister Office
13. Cabinet Secretariat
14. Ministry of Science & Technology
15. Ministry of Jal Shakti
16. Ministry of Textiles
17. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
18. Ministry of New and Renewable Energy
19. Department of Atomic Energy
20. Ministry of Power
21. Comptroller and Auditor General for India
22. Ministry of Information & Broadcasting
23. Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change
24. Ministry of Agriculture
25. Ministry of Rural Development
26. Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution
27. Ministry of Education
28. Ministry of Culture
29. Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports
30. Ministry of Food Processing Industries
31. Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation
32. Department of Space
33. Ministry of Panchayati Raj
34. Ministry of Women & Child Development
35. Ministry of Earth Sciences
36. Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying
37. Ministry of Cooperation
38. Ministry of AYUSH
39. Department of Legal Affairs
40. Legislative Department
41. Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology

- 3.2 The Advice A & B Sections (including officers posted in various Ministries/Departments) received a total of **10328** references from various Ministries/Departments of Government of India for legal advice on litigation matters, cabinet notes, private member bills, state bills, conveyancing matters, vetting of counter affidavits and legal advice on general matters during the F.Y. 2023-2024.

- 3.3 **2441** SLPs, **1431** court cases, **2558** references for legal advice on general matters, **2264** vetting of counter affidavits, **313** Cabinet Notes, **41** Private Members Bills, **68** State Bills/Ordinances and **206** conveyancing matters relating which include lease agreement/MoUs. etc. were examined.
- 3.4 The Officials of this Department took part in **315** national and international conferences and meetings during the period.
- 3.5 **81** RTI applications and **8** public grievances pertaining to the Advice Sections were dealt with.
- 3.6 **40** Parliament Questions/inputs for questions were processed.

4. NOTARY CELL

- 4.1 The administration of the Notaries Act, 1952 and the Notaries Rules, 1956 comes under the purview of the Notary Cell. The Notary Cell processes the online applications received from legal practitioners or other persons who possess prescribed qualifications for appointment as Notaries. This includes examination and scrutiny of these applications; holding of interviews; appointment of selected persons as notaries; etc. The Notary Cell also conducts inquiries into the allegations of professional misconduct on the part of the notaries. It also handles the requests for verification of the Central Notaries received from police authorities.
- 4.2 The Notary Cell also processes the applications for renewal of certificates of practice as notaries issued by the Central Government. Applications for change in the area of practice of the notaries are also processed by the Notary Cell. .
- 4.3 So far, approximately 22742 persons have been granted Certificate of Practice for practicing as Notaries by the Central Government in various States/ Union Territories of the country.

4.4 Streamlining the Process of Appointment of Notaries: -

In order to streamline the process of appointment of Central notaries, the Notary Cell has taken the following steps:

- (a) The process of appointment through physical interviews has been discontinued. Interviews for appointment of notaries are now held in online mode. This has allowed ease of access to the applicants, who have applied for appointment as Central notaries, and has brought greater transparency in the entire process. Online interview is also economical to the applicants as it saves travel cost and time for them. The applicants can now appear in the online interview from their home or office.
- (b) Towards creating a paper-less system, the requirement of submission of physical applications has been replaced by the online system of applications.

4.5 Ease of Access to the Citizens: -

In order to provide ease of access to the citizens so far as notarial services are concerned, the Central Government has amended the Notaries Rules, 1956 vide notification dated 24th February, 2024, increasing the number of notaries to be appointed by the Central Government in various States and UTs to 1,04,925.

4.6 Appointment of Notaries: -

During the period 2023-24, Certificate of Practice were issued to 185 new Notaries. Further, after following the due process, as prescribed in the Notaries Act, 1952 and the Notaries Rules, 1956, the Central Government provisionally approved appointment of 32350 legal practitioners as Notaries in 13 States and UTs as detailed below:

Sl. No.	Name of the State/ UT	No. of legal practitioners provisionally approved for appointment as Notaries
1.	Maharashtra	14648
2.	Gujarat	8086
3.	Rajasthan	4538
4.	Haryana	1357
5.	Delhi	975
6.	Himachal Pradesh	578
7.	Odisha	531
8.	Assam	420
9.	Goa	296
10.	Bihar	331
11.	Jharkhand	320
12.	Uttarakhand	170
13.	Chandigarh	100
	Total	32350

4.7 Other activities: -

During the year 2023-24, Certificates of Practice of about 3000 Central Notaries were renewed. The Notary Cell processed and disposed of 700 applications filed under the Right to Information Act (RTI) Act; disposed of 350 complaints lodged against notary public; and handled 67 requests from police authorities for verification of notary public. Responding to public concerns and queries, the Notary Cell resolved 263 requests related to grievances and inquiries from citizens and concluded 17 court cases.

5. JUDICIAL SECTION

- 5.1 The Judicial Section is responsible for the conduct of litigation of the Government of India and Union Territories before the Supreme Court, various High Courts, the Central Administrative Tribunals and the District Courts. Its functions include processing the appointments of the Attorney General for India, the Solicitor General and the Additional Solicitors General of India, Central Government Counsels in the Supreme Court, High Courts, the Central Administrative Tribunals, the District

Courts and the Consumer Forums in various States for conducting litigation work on behalf of the Central Government, engaging Law Officers and other Counsels on behalf of the Ministries/ Departments for conducting cases before the Supreme Court, the High Courts, the Tribunals, the Commissions of Inquiry, the District Courts, the Quasi-Judicial Authorities etc. Its functions also include formulation and settlement of their terms and conditions for conducting cases. The Judicial Section is also responsible for nomination of Arbitrators in disputes between the various Departments of the Government of India and private parties.

The Section is responsible for issuing statutory orders authorizing various Officers to sign and verify complaints and written statements in suits before any Court with civil jurisdiction or in writ proceedings by or against Central Government under Order XXVII, Rule 1 of the Civil Procedure Code, 1908. This Section authorizes Officers to sign contracts and agreements on behalf of the President of India under Article 299(1) of the Constitution of India.

This Section deals with the work of reciprocal arrangements with foreign countries for service of summons in civil suits, execution of decrees of Civil Courts, enforcement of maintenance orders and administration of the estates of foreigners dying intestate in India.

India assented to the Hague Convention on the Service Abroad of Judicial and Extrajudicial Documents in Civil or Commercial Matters and also to the Hague Convention on Taking of Evidence Abroad in Civil and Commercial Matters in the year 2007. The Ministry of Law and Justice is the Central Authority for both the Conventions. The Judicial Section deals with the processing of service of summons/notices received through Judicial Authorities from foreign countries under the said Convention to Indian nationals. It also deals with forwarding of summons/notices originating from Judicial Authorities of our country to the Central Authorities of foreign countries.

5.2 The activities undertaken by the Judicial Section are as follows:

(A) Conduct of Central Govt. litigation before different courts of law through Law Officers/ Panel Counsels:

- a). During the period from 01.01.2023 to 31.03.2024, the Ld. Solicitor General of India (SGI) Shri Tushar Mehta was reappointed. Additional SGI for High Courts of Karnataka and Telangana have been appointed afresh. Besides, six Addl. SGIs for Supreme Court and High Courts of Punjab & Haryana, Gujarat, Delhi, Patna have been reappointed.
- b). The term of the sixteen Deputy Solicitor General of India for different High Courts have been extended. Besides, new Deputy Solicitors General have been engaged for the High Court of Madras, Madurai Bench and High Court of Calcutta at Kolkata.
- c). The resignations of one Additional Solicitor General India and one Deputy Solicitor General of India have been processed.
- d). A total of 2017 Advocates were empanelled or their terms as panel counsel have been extended for the various courts / tribunals in the country.
- e). The resignations of 22 panel counsel have been processed.

- f). Proposals are received from some of the Ministries/Department, dealing with special functions, regarding separate panels of advocates for their specific representation in different courts. Besides this, requests / proposals are also received from various Ministries/ Departments of the Government of India for the engagement of Law Officers, Panel Counsels and of private Advocates to represent them in various courts in the country on normal or special terms and conditions. During the period, about 458 of such proposals have been processed.
- (B) Clarification and various issues viz. terms of engagement of panel counsel, issues related to fee schedule etc.:** While references for clarification on various issues are received from time to time regarding the terms and conditions of engagement of Panel Counsel, their fee schedule etc. during the period, about 230 such clarifications have been issued.
- (C) Nomination of Arbitration panel counsel in domestic as well International commercial disputes, involving Government / CPSE on the one hand and CPSE/private party on the other:** Requests are received regarding engagement of Arbitration Panel Counsel to represent various Ministries / Departments in Arbitration cases. During the period, in response to such requests, Arbitration panel counsel have been engaged in about 262 Arbitration cases.
- (D) Entering into Treaties and Agreements with foreign countries in matters of civil law:** The Ministry of Law & Justice, Department of Legal Affairs, is the nodal Ministry for reciprocal arrangement with foreign countries. In addition to this, Ministry of Law & Justice, Department of Legal Affairs enters into various agreements on legal co-operation under civil law with other countries. Under this obligation, during the period, the Mutual Legal Assistance Treaties in civil and commercial matters with the Socialist Republic of Vietnam is being finalised.
- (E) Examination and processing of requests arising out of bilateral treaties in respect of service of summons etc. (Mutual Legal Assistance Treaties / Reciprocal Arrangements) and multilateral treaties (the Hague convention of 1965/1971):** The Ministry of Law & Justice, Department of Legal Affairs is designated as the Central Authority under Hague Convention, 1965 for service abroad of judicial and extra judicial documents in civil and commercial matters. Under this obligation, during the said period, about 3829 requests have been processed.
- (F) RTI / Public Grievance/ Parliamentary Questions related work:** During the period about 352 RTI applications and other related matters have been disposed of and as on date no public grievance is pending on part of Judicial Section on PG Portal / CPGRAMS. Also, during the said period in total 46 parliamentary questions have been replied to.

6. ADR CELL

- 6.1 The traditional mode of dispute resolution, i.e. litigation, is a lengthy process leading to delays in dispensation of justice as well as overburdening of Judiciary. In such a scenario, Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanisms like arbitration, conciliation and mediation assume significance. These ADR mechanisms are less adversarial, informal and are capable of providing a better substitute to the conventional methods of resolving disputes.
- 6.2 The Government has also taken various steps and measures towards revitalizing and strengthening the contract enforcement and commercial dispute resolution regimes including Alternative Dispute

Resolution (ADR) mechanisms, to enable ease of doing business and boost investor confidence. The legislative interventions and policy initiatives in the field have gone a long way in strengthening the position of India as a robust jurisdiction for resolution of disputes.

6.3 The Department is concerned *inter-alia* with the administration of the Mediation Act, 2023, the India International Arbitration Centre Act, 2019, the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996 and the Commercial Courts Act, 2015.

6.4 The Mediation Act, 2023:

6.4.1 A successful settlement not only helps in preserving the relationship amongst the parties, offering ease of living but also in great savings of time and resources which in turn contribute in the growth of the nation's economy. In furtherance of enabling a statutory ecosystem for mediation and to have a consolidated law on mediation, the Mediation Act, 2023 was enacted. Mediation law will prove to be a pivotal reform towards providing comprehensive recognition to mediation and enabling the culture of amicable settlement of disputes outside of courts to take root.

6.4.2 The Mediation Bill, 2021 was introduced in the Parliament on 20.12.2021. Subsequently, the Bill was referred to the Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice. The Committee presented its One hundred and seventeenth (117th) Report on the Mediation Bill, 2021 to the Hon'ble Chairman, Rajya Sabha on 13th July, 2022.

6.4.3 Based on the recommendations of the Parliamentary Standing Committee and consultation undertaken by the Department, the official amendments to the Mediation Bill, 2021 were moved in the Monsoon session of the Parliament in July 2023 and the Bill was passed by the Rajya Sabha on 01.08.2023 and by Lok Sabha on 07.08.2023. Thereafter, the Bill as passed by both the Houses of Parliament received the assent of the Hon'ble President of India on 14.09.2023 and was published in the official gazette on 15.09.2023.

6.4.4 Keeping in view certain administrative and legal pre-conditions which are required to be fulfilled before all the provisions of the Act can be enforced, it was decided that the provisions of the Act may be brought into force in a phased manner. Accordingly, several provisions of the Act were brought into force *vide* gazette notification dated 09.10.2023.

6.4.5 The Mediation Act, 2023, lays down the legislative framework for mediation to be adopted by disputing parties, especially institutional mediation where various stakeholders have been identified to establish a robust and efficacious mediation ecosystem in India. The salient provisions of the Mediation Act, 2023 *inter-alia* include:

- (i) provisions relating to voluntary pre-litigation mediation in matters of civil or commercial dispute before parties approach a court or tribunal
- (ii) matters or disputes not fit for mediation
- (iii) process of mediation to be completed within a maximum period of 180 days
- (iv) procedure for appointment of mediator and conduct of mediation
- (v) functions of Mediation Service Providers and Mediation Institutes

- (vi) Mediated Settlement Agreement resulting from mediation being final, binding and enforceable in accordance with the provisions of Code of Civil Procedure, 1908, in the same manner as if it were a judgment or decree of a Court;
- (vii) challenge to Mediated Settlement Agreement to lie on limited grounds of fraud, corruption, impersonation etc.
- (viii) community mediation for reference of disputes with consent of parties which are likely to affect peace, harmony and tranquillity amongst the residents or families of any area or locality;
- (ix) provision of online mediation;
- (x) establishment of the Mediation Council of India.
- (xi) Power to make rules and regulations inter-alia for conduct of mediation.

6.5 India International Arbitration Centre Act, 2019:

The India International Arbitration Centre Act, 2019 (earlier known as New Delhi International Arbitration Centre Act, 2019) was enacted in 2019 to provide for the establishment of the IIAC as an institute of national importance for the purpose of creating an independent and autonomous regime for institutionalised arbitration and to develop India as a hub of arbitration.

The Act provides for the appointment of persons of repute and having knowledge and expertise in institutional arbitration as Chairperson and Members of the IIAC.

The Centre was established on 13th June, 2022 and is envisaged to compete with leading arbitral institutes such as Singapore International Arbitration Centre (SIAC), Hong Kong International Arbitration Centre (HKIAC), London Court of International Arbitration (LCIA), Dubai International Arbitration Centre and so on.

6.6 The Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996 and Arbitration Council of India:

- 6.6.1 The Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996 consolidates the law relating to domestic arbitration, international commercial arbitration, enforcement of foreign arbitral awards and conciliation. The Act is based on the Model Law adopted by the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) in 1985.
- 6.6.2 The Arbitration Act is divided in five parts. Part I deals with arbitrations where the seat is in India and has no application to a foreign-seated arbitration. It is, therefore, a complete code in dealing with appointment of arbitrators, commencement of arbitration, making of an award and challenges to the aforesaid award as well as execution of such awards. Part-I A provides for the establishment of Arbitration Council of India- a national level body for grading of arbitral institutes with a view to promote institutional arbitration in the country and to develop India as a hub of international arbitration. Part II deals with the enforcement of a foreign award, as defined, in India. Part III deals with the Conciliation and Part IV deals with miscellaneous provisions.
- 6.6.3 To keep pace with current developments in the arbitration landscape and to enable arbitration as a viable dispute resolution mechanism, the Indian arbitration law has undergone significant changes in

the years 2015, 2019 and 2021. The changes are enabled to signal a paradigm shift for ensuring timely conclusion of arbitration proceedings, minimizing judicial intervention in the arbitral process and enforcement of arbitral awards. The amendments are further aimed at promoting institutional arbitration, updating the law to reflect best global practices and resolve ambiguities thereby establishing an arbitration ecosystem where arbitral institutions can flourish.

- 6.6.4 The Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Act, 2019 provides for establishment of the Arbitration Council of India (Council) for the purpose of *inter-alia* framing policies governing the grading of arbitral institutions and recognizing professional institutes providing accreditation of arbitrators.
- 6.6.5 The establishment of the Council is aimed to minimize the roles of courts in arbitration matters, by providing that parties may approach arbitral institutions which are graded by the Council and designated by the Supreme Court and High Courts, as the case may be, for the purpose of appointment of arbitrators under section 11 of the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996.
- 6.6.6 With a view to expedite the establishment of the Council, the following Rules have been notified according to the provisions of the Amendment Act:
 - (i) The Arbitration Council of India (Terms and Conditions and the Salary and Allowances payable to Chairperson and Members) Rules, 2022.
 - (ii) The Arbitration Council of India (Qualifications, Appointment and other Terms and Conditions of the Service of Chief Executive Officer) Rules, 2022.
 - (iii) The Arbitration Council of India (Travelling and other Allowances Payable to Part-time Members) Rules, 2022.
 - (iv) The Arbitration Council of India (Number of Officers and other Employees, their qualifications, appointment and other Terms and Conditions) Rules, 2022.

Further, Section 10 of the Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Act, 2019 which deals with various aspects of the Council have been brought into force *vide* notification dated 12.10.2023.

Presently, other steps for the establishment of Arbitration Council of India are underway.

6.7 The Commercial Courts Act, 2015:

- 6.7.1 Commercial and financial markets have a big role to promote a country's economic standing in the comity of nations. For such economic activities to prosper, simple framework of rules that encourage investors and promote business activities is a pre-requisite. Therefore, the Government has given high priority to frame business facilitating laws and rules *inter-alia* with a view to make India one of the preferred destinations for investment and business. In this context, the Parliament enacted the Commercial Courts Act, 2015 which provides for establishment of Commercial Courts at district level, Commercial Division and Commercial Appellate Division in the High Courts.
- 6.7.2 Carrying the agenda forward and to continue with the economic reforms in the country, the Central Government has taken several steps to boost the investment and business friendly atmosphere in the country and facilitate quick resolution of disputes with least interference of the courts. In this endeavour, the Commercial Courts, Act, 2015 was amended in 2018. The Amendments have

facilitated the fast tracking of Commercial disputes by reducing the specified value of a commercial dispute to Rs. 3 lakhs from the earlier Rs. 1.00 Crore and establishment of Commercial Courts at District Judge level in the jurisdiction of High Courts enjoying Ordinary Original Civil Jurisdiction.

- 6.7.3 Also, to ease the load on the judicial system, mandatory “*Pre-Institution Mediation and Settlement*” (PIMS) mechanism has been introduced wherein plaintiff is required to undertake mediation before approaching the Court for settlement of dispute except where any urgent interim relief is contemplated. On failure to resolve dispute through PIMS mechanism, the claimant can approach the courts for resolution of their commercial dispute. The amended Act also provides for establishment of Commercial Appellate Court at District level and Commercial Court below District Judge level in such territories wherein the High Courts do not enjoy ordinary original civil jurisdiction.
- 6.7.4 The establishments of Commercial Courts in the Country have positively impacted the resolution of commercial disputes in a time bound manner.

6.8 Guide on Alternative Dispute Resolution:

On the occasion of Constitution Day on 26.11.2023, a handbook titled ‘*A Guide to Alternative Dispute Resolution*’ was released by the Hon’ble Vice President of India. The Guide provides overview and insights on the brief history of different Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanisms, broad contours of these mechanisms including statutory provisions, the advantages of these mechanisms and the various steps and legislative interventions carried out by the Government relating thereto.

6.9 Signing of India-Singapore Memorandum of Understanding in the Sphere of Law and Dispute Resolution:

- 6.9.1 In March 2024, India and Singapore have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on cooperation between the two countries in the sphere of Law & Dispute Resolution. The Memorandum of Understanding was signed in a virtual meeting of the Minister of State for Law and Justice (I/C), Government of India, Shri Arjun Ram Meghwal for the Indian side and the Minister for Culture, Community and Youth and Second Minister for Law, Government of Singapore, Mr. Edwin Tong for the Singapore side.
- 6.9.2 The MoU is on further cooperation between the two countries in the areas of common interest such as international commercial dispute resolution and matters relating to promotion of robust alternative dispute resolution mechanisms in respective countries etc.
- 6.9.3 The MoU *inter-alia* provides for the establishment of Joint Consultative Committee to oversee its implementation.

7. DIGITALISATION AND CYBER SECURITY

- 7.1 India’s digital landscape has seen remarkable growth empowering its people by encompassing over half of its population within just a decade. In the midst of this digital revolution, the Department of Legal Affairs, once overwhelmed with paperwork, has made considerable progress in transitioning to a paperless environment. This shift underscores the continuous commitment to digital adoption and improving government operational efficiency. A notable initiative is the introduction of the Legal

Information Management and Briefing System (LIMBS), a digital platform designed to track court cases involving the Union of India. LIMBS enables real-time case tracking and streamlines fee management for Law Officers, Panel Counsels, and Advocates. Officials, who once had to be physically present in court to ascertain the status of orders, can now instantly obtain this information online. The Department is continually working to enhance the platform, aiming to improve ease of use. Moreover, the digitization of the Notary application process marks a substantial progression, allowing citizens to apply for notarization online, aiming to shift the entire notarization process to a digital platform for easy access from home. Aligned with the Government's focus on services centred around citizens and supporting the Vision 2047 objectives, these efforts also foster a conducive environment for businesses. The Department of Legal Affairs has notably upgraded its website to improve the user experience by offering comprehensive information through an intuitive design, clear text, and detailed content with hyperlinks to related organizations. This ensures seamless navigation across different web browsers, operating systems, and internet speeds, including mobile devices. The Department of Legal Affairs has launched a new website dedicated to the 'One Nation, One Election' initiative. This platform is a crucial tool for spreading awareness and collecting public opinions on the policy. It also provides access to the High-Level Committee's report.

- 7.2 In addition, the Department has also transitioned to a paperless office by digitizing numerous documents and processes, enhancing transparency and expediting the decision-making workflow. Operations such as file creation, notation, decision-making at various levels, and issuing notifications are now managed online through the e-Office 7.0 platform. The implementation of e-Office has revolutionized government functions, enabling efficient online file handling, tracking, and swift decision-making with continuous online monitoring. Moreover, the Department of Legal Affairs has fully embraced the Government e-Marketplace (GeM), a paperless and cashless procurement platform for commonly used goods and services, which minimizes human intervention and streamlines procurement processes.
- 7.3 As the Department of Legal Affairs expands its digital footprint, it has simultaneously enhanced its efforts to strengthen cybersecurity. These initiatives aim to protect crucial digital infrastructure and its data from emerging threats. In adherence to the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) directives, the Department of Legal Affairs has launched action plans to reinforce cybersecurity. The formulation of a Cyber Security Crisis Management Plan (CCMP) marks the initial phase, appointing a Chief Information Security Officer (CISO), Deputy CISO along with an expert team to oversee the plan's formulation and implementation. The CCMP serves as a methodical policy framework for the Department, particularly in crisis situations, incorporating steps such as software updates to enhance network and equipment security and the replacement of outdated IT hardware with more secure alternatives. The strategy extends to the Department's remote sites to guarantee uniform network security measures. A dedicated team undertakes ongoing cybersecurity surveillance, regular audit concentrating on identifying any intrusions or security shortcomings. The replacement of outdated ICT devices, the upgrade of network devices, and the installation of security tools have been significant accomplishments this year in maintaining cybersecurity initiatives. Financial provisions have been allocated for the implementation of the CCMP, guaranteeing the availability of necessary resources to address potential cyber threats. The CCMP strategy takes a comprehensive approach to safeguard all facets of the Department's IT infrastructure, striving for a robust cybersecurity defence.

- 7.4 In line with a comprehensive strategy to spread knowledge and elevate awareness about cybersecurity and associated threats amongst the officers and officials, the Department has conducted awareness programmes via sessions, circulars, and social media campaigns throughout the year. These communications have covered crucial topics such as cybersecurity best practices, the complexities of cyber threats, and their countermeasures. The year 2023 marked a significant achievement for the Department in cybersecurity, with the execution of strategic initiatives, the designation of nodal officers, and the allocation of targeted financial resources to strengthen cybersecurity measures.
- 7.5 The overarching goal is to ensure that the Department's public services, including notarization and mediation among others, are easily accessible to Indian citizen, aligning with the Government's Vision 2047.

8. IMPLEMENTATION CELL

8.1 Administration of Statutes:

The Cell is concerned with the administration of the following Acts: -

- (i) The Advocates Act, 1961
- (ii) The Advocates' Welfare Fund Act, 2001.

The Bar Council of India is a statutory body established under section 4 of the Advocates Act, 1961 that regulates the legal practice and legal education in India. Its members are elected from amongst the lawyers in India and as such represents the Indian bar. It prescribes standards of professional conduct, etiquettes and exercises disciplinary jurisdiction over the bar. It also sets standards for legal education and grants recognition to universities whose degree in law will serve as a qualification for students to enrol themselves as advocates upon graduation. Rules framed by Bar Council of India under the Advocates Act, 1961 and The Advocates Welfare Fund Act, 2001 are available on the official website of the Bar Council of India i.e. www.barcouncilofindia.org.

- 8.2 **The Advocates' Welfare Fund Act, 2001:** Social security in the form of financial assistance to junior lawyers and welfare schemes for indigent or disabled advocates has always been a matter of concern for the legal fraternity. Certain States enacted their own legislation on the subject. The Parliament enacted "Advocates' Welfare Fund Act, 2001" applicable to the Union Territories and the States which do not have their own enactments enabling them to create "Advocates' Welfare Fund". This Act makes it compulsory for every advocate to affix stamps of the requisite value on every Vakalatnama filed in any Court, Tribunal or other Authority. Sums collected by way of sale of "Advocates' Welfare Fund Stamps" constitute an important source of the Fund. Any practicing Advocate may become member of the Fund on payment of an application fee and annual subscription. The Fund shall vest in and be held and applied by the Trustee Committee established by the appropriate Government. The Fund shall, *inter alia*, be used for making *ex-gratia* grant to a member of the fund in case of a serious health problem, payment of a fixed amount on cessation of practice and in case of death of a member, to his nominee or legal heir, medical and educational facilities for the members and their dependents, purchase of books and for common facilities for advocates.

8.3 Law Commission Reports: The Implementation Cell is responsible for processing of reports of the Law Commission of India, laying them before the Parliament and forward reports to the concerned Ministries/Departments for their examination /implementation as well as pursue them for expeditious action. The Law Commission of India has submitted 1-287 & 289 reports out of which 277 reports have been laid before both the Houses of the Parliament. All the reports received till 19.03.2024 have been forwarded to the concerned Ministries/Departments for their examination/ implementation or further action at their end. Remaining 11 Reports will be laid before both the Houses of the Parliament soon. The Implementation Cell, in pursuance of the recommendations of the Department Related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievance, Law & Justice, since 2005 has been continuously laying Annual statement showing the status of pending Law Commission Reports before both the Houses of the Parliament. The last of such Statement (15th Statement) was laid on the Table of both the Houses of Parliament (in Lok Sabha on 01.04.2022 and Rajya Sabha on 31.03.2022). The Commission also makes its reports available through its website i.e. www.lawcommissionofindia.nic.in.

8.4 Legal Education: Under the Advocates Act, 1961, Bar Council of India is a statutory body to regulate the legal education in India. Necessary steps have been taken by this Department as per the observations made by Hon'ble Prime Minister in his speech delivered at the Joint Conference of Chief Minister and Chief Justice of High Courts on 30th April, 2022. In this regard, this Department had sought comments on the subject of revamping the Legal Education System in India in the light of New Education Policy- 2020 from National Law Universities (NLUs).

8.5 The Advocates (Amendment) Act, 2023 (33 of 2023):

Repeal of 'The Legal Practitioners Act, 1879 (18 of 1879), amendment of the Advocates Act, 1961 (25 of 1961) by incorporating provisions of Section 36 of the Legal Practitioners Act of 1879 in the Advocates Act.

The proposal for repeal is in tune with the policy of the Central Government to repeal all obsolete laws which have lost their utility. It helps in reducing the number of laws in the statute book. The Legal Practitioner Act, 1879 is an Act to deal with legal practitioners in the country. It was a British Era Act. After independence, Parliament has enacted a new law, namely, the Advocates Act, 1961 (25 of 1961) to deal with legal practitioners. All the aspects which are dealt with in the Legal Practitioner Act, 1879 are already covered under the Advocates Act, 1961 except the matter relating to 'touts'.

In view of section 50 of the Advocates Act, 1961, all sections of the Legal Practitioners Act, 1879, except sections 1, 3, and 36 have been repealed. The proposal for the repeal of the remaining three sections i.e. 1, 3, and 36 would help in reducing the number of superfluous enactments in the statute book.

The Department of Legal Affairs had taken up the matter to repeal the applicable provisions of the Legal Practitioners Act, 1879 with the Legislative Department, the Law Commission of India and the Bar Council of India. The Department of Legal Affairs had also constituted a committee to review the Acts and rules administered by the Department. The Committee had recommended to repeal 'The Legal Practitioners Act, 1879' (18 of 1879), a British era legislation, with consequential amendments in the Advocates Act, 1961.

The repealing of the Legal Practitioners Act, 1879 from the statutes book, will be a contribution to achieve the goal of repealing the obsolete laws specifically that pertain to British era. It will also be a step towards ease of doing business and ease of living for citizens. It would also help in regulating the legal profession by a single Act i.e., the Advocates Act, 1961.

Currently, the Legal Practitioners Act, 1879 has been repealed and the Advocates (Amendment) Act, 2023 has been passed by the Parliament and the assent of the Hon'ble President of India has also been received on 8th December, 2023.

9. EVENTS AND SOCIAL MEDIA COVERAGE

9.1 SOCIAL MEDIA CELL: Department of Legal Affairs has a dedicated Social Media Cell which is responsible for disseminating information and creating public awareness regarding the objectives and various activities of the Department through an effective outreach on different Social Media Platforms. Besides the social media platforms, the department also on a regular basis uses other traditional modes of communication and dissemination like press, radio and television. Press releases are issued through the PIB from time-to-time regarding new initiatives and achievements of the department and also on various event organized by it. The Social Media Cell coordinates these and other outreach activities with different media units of Ministry of I & B like PIB, CBC, Directorate of Field Publicity, All India Radio and Doordarshan. The cell is also required to collaborate with other Ministries and Departments of the Government of India from time-to-time for pooling resources and collating activities. Some of the highlights of the activities of the social media Cell during the year are detailed below:

9.2 ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED/ COORDINATED BY THE SOCIAL MEDIA CELL:

- Lifestyle for Environment Campaign (LiFE) | 1st-5th June 2023
- Meeting with Vietnam Delegation | 13th June 2023
- Mission LiFE Environment Quiz | 15th-21st June 2023
- International Yoga Day | 21st June 2023
- Adobe Software Training | 19th-20th June 2023
- Chintan Shivir | 25th June 2023
- Goods and Services Tax Day | 1st July 2023
- Minister of State (I/C) for Law and Justice and officials met with Vietnamese Delegation | 2nd July 2023
- Seminar on Engagements between India and UNIDROIT | 11th July 2023
- 164th Income Tax Day | 24th July 2023
- Postcard Making Competition on Angdaan Mahotsav | 31st July 2023
- Angdaan Mahotsav (Indian Organ Donation Day) | 3rd August 2023
- Independence Day | 15th August 2023
- National Sports Day Quiz | 26th-8th September 2023
- National Sports Day | 29th August 2023

- 10th Meeting of Ministers of Justice of member states of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation | 5th September 2023
- Hindi Diwas | 14th September 2023
- Garbage Free India Special Campaign 2.0 | 15th September-2nd October 2023
- Law Secretary met with Singapore Delegation | 18th September 2023
- Hindi Anuvaad Pratiyogita | 20th September 2023
- National Cyber Security Awareness Month | October 2023
- Swachhta Diwas | 2nd October 2023
- Garbage Free India Special Campaign 3.0 | 2nd-31st October
- Brahmha Kumaris Training Session | 27th October 2023
- Pledge Ceremony for Rastriya Ekta Diwas | 26th October 2023
- Run for Unity | 28th October 2023
- National Unity Day | 31st October 2023
- Vigilance Awareness Week | 30th October-5th November 2023
- Constitution Day | 26th November 2023
- Brahma Kumaris Session on Stress Management | 10th November 2023
- Advocates Amendment Bill 2023 passed by Lok Sabha | 4th December 2023
- Brahma Kumaris Session on Stress Management | 8th December 2023
- Prevention of Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Campaign | 12th-19th December 2023
- Brahma Kumaris Digital Detox Session | 22nd December 2023
- Empowering Tribals Transforming India (PM-JANMAN) | 16th-23rd January 2024
- Brahma Kumaris Session on Emotional Engineering | 5th January 2024
- World Hindi Day | 10th January 2024
- National Girl Child Day | 24th January 2024
- National Voters' Day | 25th January 2024
- Republic Day | 26th January 2024
- Brahma Kumaris Session on Enhancing Communication Skills | 2nd February 2024
- Safer Internet Day | 6th February 2024
- Awareness Workshop on POSH Act | 13th February 2024
- Brahma Kumaris Session on Work Life Integration | 16th February 2024
- Capacity Building Workshop for Legal Advisors | 20th March 2024

9.3 Social Media Cell raises awareness about the Department of Legal Affairs by utilizing social media platforms i.e. Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Koo, Facebook and YouTube. The cell made a total of 2,298 posts on their official social media handles that ranged from posts covering international and national days of importance, highlighting achievements and ongoing successful activities conducted by DoLA, in addition to running informative campaigns for wider outreach.

9.4 Photographs of Important Events

(Chintan Shivir held on 25th June, 2023)



(10th Meeting of Ministers of Justice of member states of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation held on 5th September, 2023)

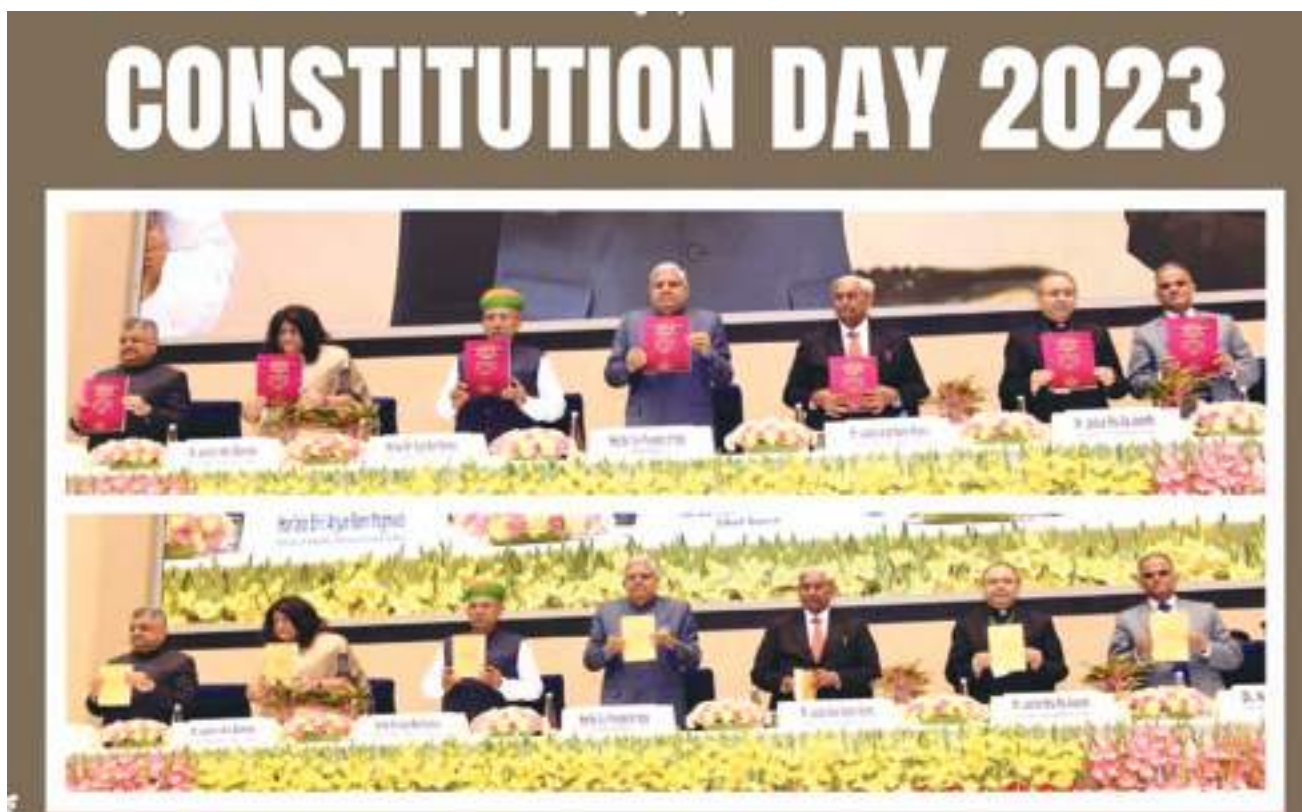


(Run for Unity held on 28th October, 2023)





(Prevention of Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Campaign held from 12th-13th February, 2024)



(Constitution Day held on 26th November, 2023)

(9th International Yoga Day held on 21st June, 2023)



(Minister of State (I/C) for Law and Justice and officials met with Vietnamese Delegation held on| 2nd July 2023)



10. TRAINING DIVISION

10.1 In the rapidly evolving landscape of the professional world, organizations are continually challenged to adapt to new technologies, methodologies, and market trends. One crucial aspect that plays a pivotal role in ensuring the sustained growth and success of any department is the establishment of a dedicated Training Division. Given the importance of Training and Capacity Building, a Training Division has been created in the department in the year 2022 and tasked with the responsibility of devising a mechanism to provide training to ILS Officers and other Officers/Officials of the Department. Since its inception, the Training Division is being headed by Dr. Anju Rathi Rana, Additional Secretary. Under her supervision, the department has signed MoUs with Training Institutes/Organisations such as Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA) and NLU-Delhi for imparting customised need basis training to ILS officers and other officers of the Department. Training Division has also developed an Annual Capacity Building Plan in consultation with the Capacity Building Commission. Also, as per directions, workshops, webinars, short trainings etc. are also being organised by the Training Division on regular basis.

10.2 Approved Training Plans: Further specialized training plans are developed for holistic development of Human Resources including:

- i. Training Plan for ILS Officers
- i. Training Plan for feeder Cadre (Supdt. and Assistant Legal)
- ii. Training Plan for Young Professionals
- iii. Training Plan for Law Interns
- iv. Training plan for SOs/ASOs
- v. Specialized Training on Law of Seas

10.3 Activities Conducted during the F.Y 2023-24 for Capacity Building:

- i. Development of Annual Capacity Building Plan (ACBP) in consultation with Capacity Building Commission.
- ii. Implementation of Training Calendar developed under ACBP
- ii. Conduct of Trainings/Workshops/Webinars etc. for the Officers/Officials of the department.
- iii. Onboarding of employees of the department on the centralized online training platform i.e. i-GoT Karmayogi Platform and monitoring of training courses consumed by the employees.
- iv. MoU on training have been signed with India Institute of Public Administration.

10.4 Trainings and Workshops Organised:

Trainings under Annual Capacity Building Plan

QUARTER	COURSES
Quarter – 1(April-June)	i. Dakshta Course ii. Introduction to Emerging Technologies iii. Stress Management iv. Prevention of Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace
Quarter – 2(July-Sept)	i. Preparation of Cabinet Notes ii. Microsoft Excel for Beginners iii. Microsoft PowerPoint Beginners iv. Microsoft Word Beginners
Quarter – 3(Oct - Dec)	i. Excel Advance ii. Power point Advance iii. Word Advance iv. Self Leadership – Stress Management
Other recommended Courses	• Dakshata programme - For all ASO and SO • Vikas course - All US or equivalent Officers • Introduction to Emerging Technologies by WITP • Stay Safe in Cyber Space by i4c • Prevention of Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace by ISTM • Stress management - Increasing your Emotional Quotient by Art of Living • Digital literacy – MS Suite

10.5 Details of Offline Trainings conducted by the Department :

S. No.	Course Name	Date	Platform	Recipients
i.	Training on Behaviour Skills (Art of Living)	29.05.2023 30.05.2023	Offline	All Employees of Department of Legal Affairs
ii.	Training on Adobe application	19.06.2023 20.06.2023	Offline	ILS Non-ILS
iii.	Stress Management Series			
	Overcoming Stress	27.10.2023	Offline	US and above
	Securing Happiness 24*7	10.11.2023	Offline	SO and Below
	Password for a healthy life	24.11.2023	Offline	US and above
	Overcoming fear of uncertainties	08.12.2023	Offline	SO and Below
	Digital Detox	22.12.2023	Offline	All Employees of Department of Legal Affairs
	Emotional Engineering	05.01.2024	Offline	
	Enhancing Communication Skills Part-I	19.01.2024	Offline	
	Enhancing Communication Skills Part-II	02.02.2024	Offline	
	Work Life Integration	16.02.2024	Offline	
	Mental Empowerment	01.03.2024	Offline	
iv.	Awareness Workshop on Prevention of Sexual Harassment of Women at workplace	13.02.2024	Offline	All Employees of Department of Legal Affairs
v.	Capacity Building Workshop for Legal Advisers and Subordinate Legal Cadre (Guest Speaker Shri Suresh Chandra, Former Law Secretary)	20.03.2024	Offline	Legal Advisers and Subordinate Legal Cadre



Photo 1: Capacity Building Sessions on Behavioural Aspects : Stress Management Session in association with Brahma Kumaris Organisation



Photo 2: Capacity Building Sessions on Behavioural Aspects : Stress Management Session in association with Brahma Kumaris Organisation



Photo 3: Capacity Building Sessions on Behavioural Aspects : Stress Management Session in association with Brahma Kumaris Organisation



Photo 4: Capacity Building Sessions on Behavioural Aspects : Stress Management Session in association with Brahma Kumaris Organisation



Photo 5: Capacity Building Sessions on Behavioural Aspects : Stress Management Session in association with Brahma Kumaris Organisation



Photo 6: Capacity Building Sessions on Behavioural Aspects : Stress Management Session in association with Brahma Kumaris Organisation



Photo 7: Capacity Building Sessions on Behavioural Aspects : Stress Management Session in association with Brahma Kumaris Organisation

11. HINDI SECTION

11.1 Progressive use of Hindi in Official work in the Department of Legal Affairs:-

- (1) The Department of Legal Affairs has taken following steps to implement various instructions issued by the Department of Official Language on the progressive use of Hindi for official purposes of the Union as contained in the Official Languages Act, 1963 and the Official Languages (Use for Official Purposes of the Union) Rules 1976: -

(a) **Notification under the Rule 10(4) of the Official Languages (Use for Official Purposes of the Union) Rules 1976:**

This Department was notified under Rule 10(4) of the Official Languages Rules, 1976 on 21-3-1980. All officers and employees proficient in Hindi submit drafts etc. of all communications addressed to State Governments/Union Territories and to private individuals and also to Central Government offices located in Region's "A" and "B" and of communications in reply to letters etc., received in Hindi or signed in Hindi, including appeals, representations etc., (from the employees) only in Hindi.

(b) **Steps taken for implementation of orders relating to the Official Language and progressive use of Hindi:**

(1) **Orders for individuals under rule 8(4):**

Under the provisions of Official Language (Use for official purpose of the Union) rule 8(4) of rule, 1976 (As amended 1987) latest orders in the name of officers/employees who are proficient in Hindi were issued on 13.12.2023 to do their complete official work in Hindi.

(2) Check Points:

A review of the check points for implementation of orders relating to the Official Language was made and orders for creation of adequate number of check points in accordance with Rule 12 of the Official Languages Rules, 1976 were issued on 13.12.2023. The effectiveness of check points is being regularly monitored through the quarterly progress reports received from sections/offices.

(3) In Sections / Units where the staff are proficient in Hindi, the use of Hindi in their day-to-day work is being encouraged. Work relating to grant of various types of leave is being done in Hindi. Almost all cases relating to House Building Advances, GPF Advances and Withdrawals etc. are also being processed in Hindi and orders are also being issued in Hindi.

(4) All general orders, notifications, resolutions and administrative reports etc. are invariably issued in bilingual form. All letters received in Hindi are invariably replied to in Hindi only. It is strictly ensured that there is no violation of the relevant rules in this regard. English to Hindi dictionaries have been provided to all sections of the Department for encouraging the use of Hindi in day-to-day official work.

(5) Hindi specimen of standard draft of all letters being used frequently by various sections have been provided. All standard forms have been prepared in Hindi and English so that employees can use them without facing any difficulty. All forms used in the Department have also been translated into Hindi. Entries in service books are also being made in Hindi. All rubber stamps, name plates, sign boards etc., are invariably prepared in bilingual form.

(6) All computers in the Department are bilingual. Facility to work in Hindi is available on the computers provided to the officers and sections of the Department.

(7) Hindi Teaching Scheme:

A time bound programme has been prepared for imparting Hindi/ Hindi Stenography/ Hindi Typing Training to the employees of the Department and its offices under the Hindi Teaching Scheme. Employees are awarded personal pay/ Advance increments/ Cash Awards etc. as per the instructions of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Department of Official Language.

(8) OLIC Meetings:

The meetings of Official Language Implementation Committee of the Department are held regularly. Additional Secretary (Rajbhasha Adhikari) of the Department is the Chairman of this Committee and Director (Admn.), all Deputy Secretaries and Under Secretaries and all Section Incharges and Branch Officers are members of this Committee whereas Assistant Director (O.L.) is the Member Secretary. In these meetings, compliance status of Quarterly progressive report and implementation of orders related to Official Language are reviewed. Minutes of the meetings are circulated to all concerned for follow-up action.

(9) Hindi Workshop:

In compliance of the official language policy of the union and instructions issued by Deptt. of Official Language, MHA with the objective of removing the difficulties being faced by the

employees of Branch Secretariat Kolkata, Deptt. of Legal Affairs and ITAT, Kolkata Bench in their day-to-day official work in Hindi, Hindi workshops were organized on 19.04.2023 and 20.04.2023 respectively. Lecture/Training was given in these workshops to officers/ Assistants/UDC,s/and Court Clerks by Shri Shamsheer Singh Asst. Director (OL) Deptt. of Legal Affairs.



Branch Secretariat Kolkata



ITAT, Kolkata Bench

In continuation of removing difficulties in the use of Hindi being faced by employees, Hindi workshops were organized at Branch Secretariat, Bengaluru, Deptt. of Legal Affairs and ITAT, Bengaluru Bench on 21.02.2024 and 23.02.2024 respectively as well.



Branch Secretariat, Bengaluru,



ITAT, Bengaluru Bench

A Hindi Workshop was also organized on 15.03.2024 in the Deptt. of Legal Affairs, Shastri Bhawan. A talk was given by Shri Shamsher Singh, Asst. Director, Deptt. of Legal Affairs to employees of Deptt. Of Legal Affairs.



Deptt. of Legal Affairs, Shastri Bhawan

(10) Official Language Inspection

In consonance with the provisions made in the Annual Programme of Deptt. of Official Language, MHA an inspection regarding review of the progress made in use of Hindi in official work of Branch Secretariat Kolkata and ITAT, Kolkata Bench was carried out on 18.04.2023 and 20.04.2023 respectively by Shri Shamsheer Singh, Assistant Director (OL), Deptt. of Legal Affairs.

An Official Language Inspection was carried out in Advice 'A' Section and Advice 'B' Section, on 10.01.2024 by Officials of Official Language Unit, Deptt. Of Legal Affairs.

In the continuation of Official Language Inspection drive, an Inspection of Branch Secretariat, Bengaluru, Deptt. Of Legal Affairs and ITAT, Bengaluru Bench was carried out by Shri Shamsheer Singh, Asst. Director and Ms. Khushboo Nidhi, Jr. Translation Officer., Deptt. Of Legal Affairs on 20.02.2024 and 22.02.2024 respectively.

(11) Organisation of Hindi Day/Hindi Fortnight:

With a view to accelerate the use of Official Language and to increase the awareness among the employees as regards to the Official Language policy and the various incentive schemes for using Hindi in official work, Hindi Diwas (Day) was celebrated in the Department on 14.09.2023. Hon'ble Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Law and Justice and Law Secretary in their messages appealed to the officers and employees of the Department to adopt Hindi in their day-to-day official work. Message received from Hon'ble Home Minister on the eve of 'Hindi Day' was also circulated in the Department and its offices. In order to make the various programmes organised in this connection effective, the 'Hindi Pakhwada' (Fortnight) was organised in the Department from 14.09.2023 to 29.09.2023. This was done with the objective of giving wider publicity to the various schemes and generating maximum output in terms of

work done in Hindi. This year, during the 'Hindi Pakhwada', 5 competitions viz, 'Hindi Essay Competition', 'Hindi Typing Competition', 'Translation Competition' and 'Hindi Noting and Drafting Competition', 'Hindi Dictation' (for group 'C', employees) were organised in the Department. Nearly 102 officers/employees participated in these competitions. Out of these 69 successful participants were awarded cash prizes. 'Hindi Diwas (Day)' was also celebrated in the Branch Secretariats of the Department and Benches of the Income Tax Appellate Tribunal at various places in the Country. Various competitions were organised on this occasion and successful participants were awarded cash prizes.



Hindi Pakhwada Competition

12. LIMBS (Legal Information and Management Briefing System)

- 12.1 The Legal Information Management and Briefing System (LIMBS) is a web-based application for monitoring all court cases where Union of India is a party. LIMBS came into operation in February 2016 and since then, the application has been working under the supervision of the Department of Legal Affairs, Ministry of Law and Justice. It is an innovative and easy to access online tool that is available 24x7 to all the stakeholders, viz., senior Government officers/officials, nodal officers and users of the Ministries/Departments.
- 12.2 LIMBS Version 2.0 is an upgraded version of LIMBS and was launched in the year 2020 in collaboration with NIC. It is a dashboard-based system for the user Ministries/Departments on which they can monitor their cases at a glance. This version uses Open-Source technologies using the coordinator framework of PHP to enhance the security and improve the efficiency of the system.
- 12.3 LIMBS also captures arbitration cases right from internal processing of the dispute at the ministry/department level followed by nomination of arbitrators, and the proceedings. The Department of Legal Affairs, Cabinet Secretariat, Niti Aayog, and PMO can access court case details on LIMBS.

Central Agency Section (CAS) of the Department of Legal Affairs also identifies and enters the details of important cases filed by the Union of India (UoI) before the Supreme Court. EAC-PM (Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister) was also given access to the LIMBS Portal for the preparation of a white paper on Union of India, litigation.

- 12.4 LIMBS portal offers a powerful solution for Ministries/Departments users seeking to modernize and optimize case management processes, improve transparency and efficiency, and enhance the delivery of justice to all stakeholders involved in the legal system.
- 12.5 Leaning towards a more automated system minimizing the manual data entry process, efforts are being made to integrate LIMBS with various Courts and Tribunal databases through APIs for seamless data transfer and update. In this regard, Supreme Court, High Court, District Courts, and 17 Tribunals were approached. Department of Legal Affairs in cooperation with NIC and respective Court/Tribunal Authorities had successfully integrated LIMBS with the following Courts and Tribunals:

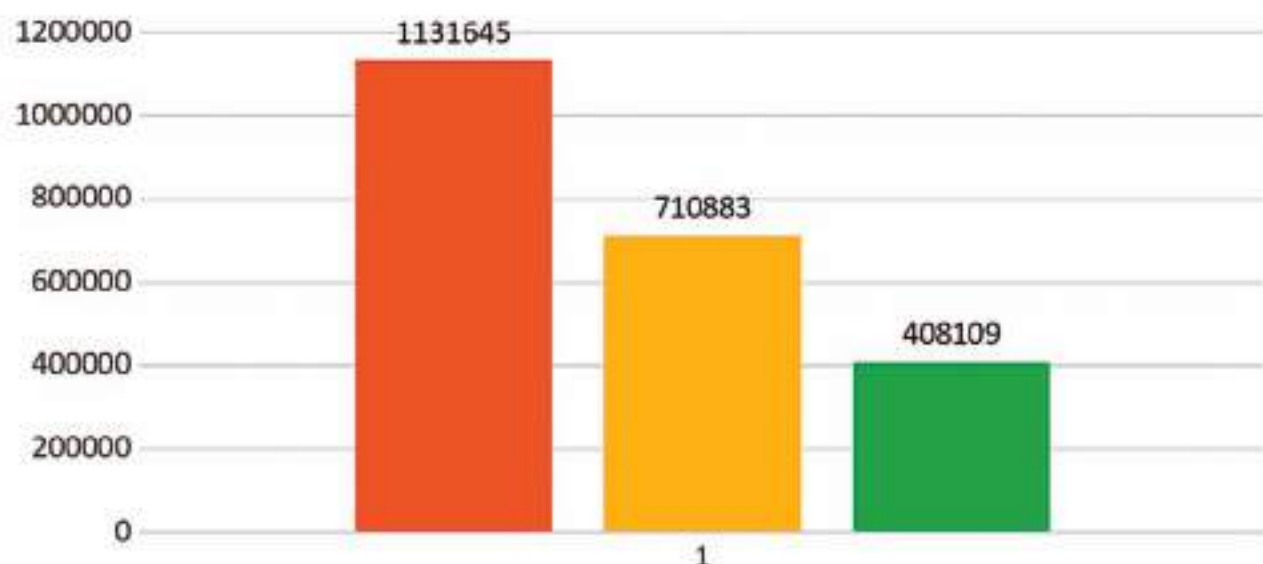
Courts/Tribunals integrated with LIMBS via API i.e.

- Supreme Court
- High Courts
- District & Session Courts

Tribunals (9):

- Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT)
- Telecom Disputes Settlement and Appellate Tribunal (TDSAT)
- Appellate Tribunal for Electricity (APTEL)
- Customs Excise and Service Tax Appellate Tribunal (CESTAT)
- Income Tax Appellate Tribunal (ITAT)
- National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT)
- National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT)
- National Green Tribunal (NGT)
- Railway Claims Tribunal (RCT)

- 12.6 Integration of LIMBS with the remaining 4 Tribunals (AFT, NCDRC, CGIT, and Appellate Tribunals under SAFEMA) is in progress.
- 12.7 As on date **31st March 2024**, LIMBS was implemented in **all Ministries** of the Government of India, its departments, and attached offices and it brought all the stakeholders viz. users, Nodal Officers of the various Ministry/Departments, advocates etc. on a single platform. With the concerted efforts of Ministries/Departments, the application has captured **11.31 lakh** court cases (including disposed of cases) through **14049** registered users, thereby creating a unified database of litigations pertaining to the Union of India. The application has captured details of **3291** courts and **21778** advocates.

Figure 1: Outreach of LIMBS Portal

12.8 MAIN FEATURES OF LIMBS LIMBS is equipped with advanced data analytics capabilities. These features support the monitoring of cases and the uploading of fee bills by law officers, panel counsels, and advocates. The key features of LIMBS include:

- (i) **My court cases:** Users have the ability to input new cases via the 'New Entry' tab on the dashboard. They can update the most recent hearing dates and upload pertinent documents for a case through the 'Compliance Entry' section. Additionally, users may edit or input basic case details like the CNR number, advocate names, mobile numbers, and a brief history.
- (ii) **Updation:** Users can update/edit the last date of hearing, update the CNR number in which cases the CNR number is not updated while on new entry, automatic updation of case status in bulk cases, Update exception cases and Tribunals cases also.
- (iii) **Important Cases** – A Nodal Officer has the facility to mark cases as 'Important' after getting approval from the concerned Secretary. Users can also view important cases of the concerned Ministry/Department under the Important Cases tab on the dashboard.
- (iv) **MIS Reports:** Users can view statistical reports or summary reports, viz. case status-wise summary, case category-wise summary, financial implication-wise summary, court wise summary, decided cases summary, total arbitration cases, total raised bills, total nodal officers list, total user list, etc.

On MIS reports, users can view the litigation status of the concerned Ministry, viz. total number of cases entered, pending cases, disposed of cases, cases pending for compliance, important cases, contempt cases, counsel wise top 10 cases, subject wise pending cases, etc.
- (v) **Advanced Search:** Through this powerful utility, users can search court cases through various fields - Ministry/Department, court details, case category, financial implication, case status, party name, advocate, system date, case date, next date of hearing/judgment date and brief history.

- (vi) **Nodal Officers and Local Admins** can activate newly registered users of concerned Ministry/ Departments/Autonomous organizations/ CPSEs, etc. They can change the profile of users who have retired or transferred and can delete wrongly entered or duplicate cases.
- (vii) **Add Progress:** Users can add day to day progress of the cases and display its details on the web page.
- (viii) **Transfer of Cases:** Users of one Ministry/Department can transfer cases to other users of the same Ministry/Department or to nodal officers of other Ministries.
- (ix) **Arbitration Cases:** Users can enter details using the 'Case Entry' tab and can view entered cases using the list under the 'Arbitration' tab.
- (x) **AMRCD/AMRD Module:** It has a separate domain to enter and monitor cases pertaining to the Administrative Mechanism for Resolution of Commercial Disputes AMRCD and AMRD. Reports can also be generated under the 'MIS Report' tab.
- (xi) **FAB Module** -FAB Module (Form for Appearance Bill) to enable law officers to raise bills online. This digital initiative not only saves time but also helps the smooth processing of bills.
- (xii) **Advocate Login:** Presently, advocates can log into their accounts and can enter new cases. Advocates can update the last hearing dates, next hearing dates, transfer cases by marking the status 'This is not my case' to the concerned user, send message to a respective user who is dealing with the case, and raise a bill online.
- (xiii) **Raised Bill:** Users can view the bills uploaded by the Advocate on concerned cases and generate sanction order copy also.
- (xiv) **Advice Module/ (SLP):** The SLP module was developed to capture timelines of physical processes to curb delays in the timely filing of SLPs/Appeals.
- (xv) **Exception Cases:** The exception cases are those cases containing exceptions/errors related to courts, advocate details, case category, case status, financial implication, case date, and last date of hearing. To update the exceptions/errors, a sub- module was also developed.

12.9 UPGRADATION OF LIMBS

- i. **LIMBS Homepage:** LIMBS homepage has been transformed to showcase live statistics from the LIMBS portal. The design will feature a modern, user-friendly layout with dynamic visuals that effortlessly direct users to important features and motivate engagement with strategically positioned calls to action.
- ii. **User registration page:** The user registration page for LIMBS has been redesigned to include Local/Nodal Officer details and add an option for users to fill in their email. Users may now create their username identical to their email address.
- iii. **Case Priority:** Users now have the option to select the case priority (High, Medium, Low) on the new entry page and can also generate reports based on case priority using the Advanced Search feature.

- iv. Training materials: Training materials for LIMBS are created under the framework of the Capacity Building Commission.
- v. DGQI Guidelines: LIMBS data is being updated on the Data Governance Quality Index (DGQI) portal by Niti Aayog.
- vi. Email Functionality: The LIMBS platform features an email tool that enables the Ministry/ Department Secretary to send notifications regarding upcoming hearings for relevant cases.
- vii. New Codification for LIMBS Ministries/Departments: Following the directives from NIC and the e-Courts committee, new codification of all Ministries, Departments, Attached Offices, PSUs, and Subordinate Offices have been created.
- viii. The auto-updation feature of High Court cases in LIMBS now records the case stage, next hearing date, last hearing date, and order details daily through the CNR number each time a user logs into the LIMBS portal.
- ix. Integration of LIMBS with the Supreme Court allows users to retrieve case details and orders by entering the Diary Number on the new entry page of the LIMBS portal.
- x. LIMBS registration on NAPIX platform for new API server for High Court and District and Session court cases with e-Court server has been created.
- xi. Exception Cases: A new SMS alert feature has been introduced for exceptional scenarios.
- xii. New Financial Implication: The LIMBS portal now allows users to select financial slabs on the new entry page to record the actual amount involved in the cases.
- xiii. Cause List: Users have the ability to access facilities for High Court cases and review case details by selecting a specific date from the cause list.
- xiv. LIMBS portal design has been updated to enhance user experience, functionality, and accessibility. This update offers a valuable and user-friendly platform for accessing court case information, with improved navigation and streamlined tabs for a more efficient user experience.
- xv. Module 8A: A new module is being developed for the Ministry of Finance on the LIMBS portal to tackle the backlog of pending appeals.
- xvi. Training and Support Module: This module enables users to submit requests for training or report any issues or queries they encounter while using the LIMBS portal.
- xvii. The LIMBS portal provides user-friendly step-by-step instructions and demonstrations via screenshots, along with interactive video tutorials to enhance the user experience.
- xviii. LIMBS FAQs: The LIMBS FAQs have been updated to address the most common questions and problems users face on the LIMBS portal. These FAQs help users quickly find answers to their queries and make effective use of the LIMBS platform.

- xix. To enhance the monitoring of court cases, the following new reports have been added under the MIS Reports tab:
- Affidavit Report
 - Ministry Wise User Progress Report
 - Periodic Report
 - Sub-Category report of Case type of cases
 - Contempt/NDOH report
 - Year-wise report (Last 10 years)
 - HC state-wise report
 - FAB Module – Advocate wise report
 - FAB Module- Ministry-wise report
 - LIMBS progress report under DoLA Login

12.10 IMPACT OF LIMBS

- i. LIMBS is an initiative launched at an opportune time, serving as a catalyst for improvements in the monitoring of court cases from the perspective of Ministries/Departments of Union of India. It aims to integrate with the e-Court application, providing a comprehensive solution for the effective oversight of UOI litigation. LIMBS employs a unified database, standard templates, and a common nomenclature to remove confusion and ambiguity in handling court cases. SMS alerts to advocates, users, and concerned officers ensure vigilant case management. Additionally, MIS reports have enhanced the functioning of legal cells across different Ministries/Departments.
 - ii. LIMBS has thus revolutionized the litigation monitoring system of the Union of India by introducing accountability, ownership, and cohesiveness among the users across the Ministries and improving transparency by entering the necessary information on this web application.
 - iii. LIMBS offers affordable web technology access to all stakeholders in the UOI involved in a court case, coordinating inputs that are seamlessly available 24/7 according to predefined access rules. This enables continuous monitoring of a case's various stages through a comprehensive suite of user-friendly reports.
 - iv. LIMBS aims to reduce financial burden, conserve time, and bring efficiency in the working of various Departments of a Ministry. It fosters transparency and instils a sense of responsibility among all stakeholders throughout the duration of a court case.
 - v. It will assist authorities in making data-driven decisions, evaluating the performance of various stakeholders, and conducting legal audits.
- 12.11 For the government to function in a more coordinated manner and to achieve the intended outcomes, it is essential that various departments submit their data promptly within a specified timeframe and in an integrated fashion.

12.12 TRAINING/MEETING CONDUCTED BY LIMBS TEAM

Department of Legal Affairs, keeping in view the huge user base, LIMBS had extended its support for the smooth adoption of application by all concerned Ministries/Departments. Over **191 training/meeting sessions** (both through Online and offline modes) were conducted by the LIMBS team which covered officers/officials of various Ministries/Departments like **M/o Finance (Revenue CBDT)**, **M/o Home Affairs (NCB)**, **M/o Defence (Ex-serviceman Welfares and Defence Estates)**, **D/o Space**, **M/o Labour and Employment**, **M/o Corporate affairs**, **M/o Communications (NICF)**, **M/o Women child and Development**, **CAG** etc to ensure effective dissemination of its features.



Figure 2: Training at CAG, HQ New Delhi

13. Statement showing the number of ILS and GCS (excluding Accountant and Jr. Accountant) Cadre employees in the Department and the number of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes, Ex-Servicemen and Physically Handicapped amongst them as on 31.03.2024 is at **ANNEXURE-II**.
14. Statement showing the number of employees of CSS, CSSS, CSCS, CSOLS and GCS (Accountant and Jr. Accountant only) Cadre and the number of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes, Ex-Servicemen and Physically Handicapped amongst them as on 31.03.2024 is at **ANNEXURE-III**.
15. **SWACHHATA MISSION:**
 - 15.1 Under the “Special Campaign 3.0”, cleanliness drive was conducted in the Department of Legal Affairs during 2023-24. Under the said campaign, old and obsolete items including those which were unserviceable, e-waste, worn out furniture and fittings, outdated air conditioners, etc. were auctioned. This helped in creating a cleaner environment in the Department.

- 15.2 In order to encourage cleanliness in the office area, the Department of Legal Affairs has been keenly monitoring various initiatives and organised several awareness campaigns amongst employees for maintaining cleanliness, not only in offices but also in their homes. Various steps were taken to sanitize the rooms/ open areas, etc. keeping in view the aftermath of Covid 19 and routine mopping/ sweeping/cleaning of the floors, toilets, open area, stair cases and corridors of this Department were undertaken.
- 15.3 This campaign also included weeding out of old records/ files, disposal of old newspapers, e-waste etc., apart from digitization and scanning of old records to optimize office space. The practice of single-use plastic was discouraged and, in their place, only folders/files made out of paper/e-waste paper are being emphasized.
- 15.4 Some of main initiatives undertaken by this Department include deep cleaning of toilets, corridors and other common areas and all Sections by removing extra wires, furniture, white wash in certain rooms, etc. pest control activity covering an area of about 3700 square metres has also been initiated and currently under process.
- 15.5 Modernization: This Department always strives towards a strategic approach towards modernization. During the period, renovation work was carried out in four to five rooms which, inter-alia, include Visitors/Meeting Room for dignitaries covering an area of 225 sq. ft, a small Conference Hall with an area of 441 sq. Ft., a new Cyber Cell covering an area of about 414 sq. Ft and office space for ADR Cell was created/renovated. These rooms were renovated with wooden/PVC flooring with 4-5 feet skirting and teak wood cornish with white and warm white light, Further work includes replacing window glasses with single glass, proper lighting and electrification, customized tables and chairs for proper seating, provision of blinds/curtains, provision of new air conditioners, etc.
- 15.6 Apart from the above, a Gym was built at Garage No.15 of Shastri Bhawan and also renovation and shifting of R&I Section to Garage No.50 was undertaken. Work related to Internet wiring/ electrical wiring as per requirements with necessary curtains was also undertaken. The NIC Cell of this Department was renovated with two modern cubicles and 06 running working stations with proper lighting, air-conditioning, etc. Most of the computers which were outdated or have become obsolete have been replaced by new ones with the latest configurations based on the security guidelines issued by MeitY from time to time.

16. BRANCH SECRETARIAT, MUMBAI

- 16.1 The Branch Secretariat, Mumbai is presently being headed by the Additional Government Advocate, Shri Madhab Charan Prusty as the In-charge (w.e.f. 26.6.2023 till 31.3.2024). The Branch Secretariat, Mumbai has jurisdiction over States of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Goa and Union Territory of Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu for rendering legal advice and handling of litigation of various Central Government Ministries/ Departments located in the region.
- 16.2 **Advice:** The Branch Secretariat renders legal advice to all the Ministries and Departments of Government of India located in the States within its jurisdiction. The Ministries/Departments of Central Government also approach Branch Secretariat for advice in matters pertaining to cases conducted within its jurisdiction. During 01.01.2023 to 31.03.2024 the Branch Secretariat received

1341 references for advices. All the advices are being disposed of promptly.

- 16.3 Supervision of Litigation:** The Branch Secretariat, Mumbai conducts litigation pertaining to Union of India, Ministries/ Departments on behalf of Government of India before the Hon'ble High Court of Bombay Central Administrative Tribunal, Mumbai bench, NCLT, and other Tribunals functioning within Mumbai, District Courts and State & District Commission etc. Further the Branch Secretariat also monitors cases pending before the Benches of Hon'ble High Court of Bombay and also other High Courts within its jurisdiction whenever any Ministries/Departments or other Autonomous/Statutory Bodies approach Branch Secretariat for the purpose. The Branch Secretariat also conducts litigation pertaining to the Indian Railway pending before the Hon'ble High Court, CAT, RCT, District Courts and Commission etc.
- 16.4 About 1980 cases were received by the Branch Secretariat, Mumbai pertaining to High Court at Bombay of which 709 have been disposed of. Further 1951 cases were received from other High Courts and Tribunals including Railways.**
- 16.5 Fee Bills of Counsels:** The Mumbai Branch Secretariat makes payment of professional fee towards appearance / consultation to the Ld. Addl. Solicitor General of Mumbai High Court and Counsel appearing before Hon'ble High Court of Mumbai and further makes payment to the Central Government Standing Counsel for the District Courts within the State of Maharashtra from funds allocated for the same. An amount of Rs.1.69 crore (approx.) up to 31.03.2024 has been disbursed to Counsels including Standing Counsel as professional fee.
- 16.6 RTI Matters:** During this year 29 applications were received for information under RTI Act. The same have been disposed of within the prescribed period of time as provided under the Act. Further, 4 numbers of First Appeals have been disposed of by the Branch Secretariat within the stipulated period.
- 16.7 Budget and Accounts:** The budget and accounts work in this Branch Secretariat is done online using the "PFMS" portal. All payments are done through PFMS Portal. GeM is used for procurement of goods, stationeries and other services. Pension cases are also processed through "Bhavishya" online portal.



16.8 Library and Research: The Mumbai Branch Secretariat has a library containing more than 14000 books. This library is very useful for the Officers and staff while tendering advice and also in litigation matters. The library is rich in books on various subjects i.e. journals, law books, Swamy's Handbook, MoP etc. These are regularly purchased for the use of officers and staff. Online Journal 'SCC Online' has been subscribed by the Branch Secretariat.

16.9 Progressive use of Hindi and Hindi Pakhwada: A 'Rajbhasha Samiti' is functioning in the Branch Secretariat which submits periodic reports as and when required by the authority. Various statements and forms viz. leave forms, joining report, rubber stamps, communications etc. have been made bi-lingual. Hindi Pakhwada and Hindi Diwas was organized in the month of September, 2023. Number of events and competitions were conducted for promotion of Hindi language.

16.10 HIGHLIGHTS:

16.10.1 Technological Advancement: E-office has been implemented in Branch Secretariat and officers have been encouraged to use E-office for handling the File work. The budget and accounts work in this Branch Secretariat is done online using various **software** and the "PFMS" portal. **GeM** is used for procurement of goods, stationeries and other services. Pension cases are also processed through "Bhavishya" online portal. Focus has been kept on using online journals and accordingly **SCC Online** has been subscribed for referencing in advices rendered by the Branch Secretariat. Digitisation of the records is under process. Data relating to litigation matters entered in excel format.

16.10.2 Swachhata Campaign: During the month of September 2023, Special Campaign 3.0 was been initiated in BS-Mumbai. Under this, various activities were undertaken, viz., weeding out of old records, commencement of digitization of records, identification of old and unserviceable furniture, cleanliness drive in the office including library, beautification of the office premises. Obsolete records were weeded out and a revenue of approx. Rs.84,000/- was generated. Moreover, cleanliness drive has been an ongoing process since, under which segregation of disposable records etc. is being carried out regularly.

16.10.3 Events: Various events were observed in BS-Mumbai in the year 2023. Pledge was taken by all the officers/ officials on the occasion of Vigilance Awareness Week, Organ Donation Day, National Unity Day. National Sports Day was celebrated on 29.08.2023, wherein various sporting competitions were organized. On the occasion of Constitution Day, reading of Preamble was organized in the office. Yoga Day was celebrated on 21.06.2023, wherein all the officers/ officials of the office participated in the exercise as per the Common Yoga Protocol.

IMAGES
SPECIAL CAMPAIGN



BEFORE



AFTER



BEFORE



AFTER



Pledge Taking on Organ Donation Day



YOGADAY



Celebration of Constitution Day

17. BRANCH SECRETARIAT, KOLKATA

- 17.1 During 2023-2024, the Branch Secretariat, Kolkata was headed by the Additional Government Advocate up to 16th June, 2023 and thereafter by the Senior Government Advocate/In-charge who was/is functioning as In-charge. The Branch Secretariat, Kolkata is functioning from 2nd & 3rd Floor, Middle Building, 11, Strand Road, Kolkata-700001. It has **nine** wings viz. **Advice, Litigation (High Court at Calcutta), CAT including Circuit Benches & Other High Courts, Tribunals and Lower Courts etc. within the jurisdiction of Branch Secretariat, Kolkata, Administration, Cash & Accounts, Hindi, Bill, R & I Section and Library.**

Group photo of the employees of the Branch Secretariat, Kolkata



- 17.2 The Litigation Wing of the Branch Secretariat, Kolkata looks after the entire litigation matters pertaining to different Ministries/Departments of Union of India pending before the Hon'ble High Court at Calcutta, Circuit Benches at Port Blair and Jalpaiguri and also various Tribunals, District Forums, State Commission and Lower Courts covering West Bengal, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa and States of North Eastern Region comprising of Assam, Meghalaya, Sikkim, Nagaland, Manipur, Tripura and Arunachal Pradesh.
- 17.3 Branch Secretariat, Kolkata also (i) conducts litigation matter in the Calcutta High Court by the Officers who are notified to act as Government Pleader within the meaning of Order XXVII, Rule 8B(a) of the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908; ii) acts as Office of Advocate-on-Record in Original Side of the Calcutta High Court; iii) engages Additional Solicitor General of India and/or counsel in different cases as per requirement in the Calcutta High Court matters; iv) engages counsel in the Central Administrative Tribunal, Calcutta Bench, other Tribunals in Calcutta, Consumer Redress Forum at State level and other Forums of alternative remedy; v) looks after the litigation work in the Calcutta High Court on Original Side and Appellate Side and Arbitration Case on behalf of the Central Government and vi) Branch Secretariat, Kolkata also conducts litigation pertaining to the

Indian Railways pending before the Hon'ble High Court, CAT, RCT, District Courts and Commission etc.

- 17.4 In addition to the litigation work of the Hon'ble High Court at Calcutta, this Branch Secretariat exercises general supervision and engagement of counsels over the litigation of the Central Government in Subordinate Courts in West Bengal such as City Civil Courts, Small Causes Court, Metropolitan Magistrate's Courts as well as different District Courts in West Bengal in which the Central Government is either a party or otherwise interested.
- 17.5 The Branch Secretariat, Kolkata also exercises general supervision over litigation of the Central Government in various High Courts in the Eastern Region like Patna High Court, Orissa High Court, Sikkim High Court and Gauhati High Court, drafting and vetting of instruments of conveyance, agreements, contracts and other different types of documents, to which the Central Government is a party.
- 17.6 The Branch Secretariat, Kolkata scrutinizes fee bills received from the Panel Counsels, to obtain sanction for engagement of Special Counsels at special rates to appear on behalf of Government Departments in the Hon'ble High Court at Calcutta, subordinate courts in West Bengal and in the other High Courts under its jurisdiction, prepares Paper Book for appeals in Original Side matters and all ancillary work related to litigation like issuance of back-sheets, making correspondences, having conferences etc. and also establishment and other alternative work in connection with the personnel of this Branch Secretariat.
- 17.7 The Advice Wing of this Branch Secretariat is responsible to render legal advice upon the references received from various Ministries/Departments functioning within the jurisdiction of Branch Secretariat, Kolkata. Apart from the same, other Ministries/Departments whose Headquarters are outside the jurisdiction of Branch Secretariat, Kolkata, also approach this Branch Secretariat for advice in the matter pertaining to interpretation of statutes and Court Cases.
- 17.8 During the period from 1st January, 2023 to 31st March, 2024, the Advice Wing received references totalling 1248 numbers for advice.
- 17.9 During the aforesaid period, 5979 number of cases received by the Branch Secretariat, Kolkata relating to Hon'ble High Court at Calcutta from the petitioners and from different Ministries/Departments and Autonomous bodies etc.
- 17.10 A total 994 numbers of references received during 1st January, 2023 to 31st March, 2024 by this Branch Secretariat regarding Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code and company matters before the National Company Law Tribunal, Kolkata Bench.
- 17.11 During the aforesaid period, 1446 numbers of cases received in the Branch Secretariat, Kolkata for engagement of Counsels for the matters pertaining to Hon'ble CAT, Kolkata Bench and Circuit Benches at Port Blair and Jalpaiguri. 1552 numbers of cases received for engagement of Counsel in various Tribunals, RCT, Industrial Tribunal, CESTAT, Consumer Commission and Lower Courts including arbitration cases during 1st January, 2023 to 31st March, 2024.
- 17.12 During the aforesaid period, Additional Government Advocate/In-charge was designated as Appellate Authority upto 16th June, 2023 and thereafter Senior Government Advocate/In-charge has been

designated as Appellate Authority, Assistant Legal Adviser was designated as CPIO upto 13th November, 2023 and thereafter Deputy Legal Adviser has been designated as CPIO with effect from 14th November, 2023 to deal with the RTI matters. During 1st January, 2023 to 31st March, 2024 total 32 RTI references and 02 (two) First Appeals were received and disposed of within stipulated time.

- 17.13 The Branch Secretariat, Kolkata makes payment of professional fee towards appearance/ consultation to the Ld. Additional Solicitor General of Hon'ble High Court at Calcutta and Panel Counsels appearing before Hon'ble High Court at Calcutta and further makes payment of Retainership Fee to the Central Government Standing Counsels for the District Courts within the State of West Bengal from the budget allocated for the same. The claims submitted by the panel counsels have been speedily processed proportionately out of the sanctioned budget for 2023-2024 an amount of Rs.2.83 crores has been incurred for payment towards Professional Fees to Panel Advocates and Retainership Fee for Standing Counsel for the State of West Bengal up to 31st March, 2024.
- 17.14 The Hindi Section of this Branch Secretariat is working hard for effective use of Hindi as official language. During 1st January, 2023 to 31st March, 2024 quarterly meetings of Rajbhasha Coordination Committee has been organized and Hindi workshops were also organized. Reference matters have been prepared and distributed among Sections for doing work of regular nature in Hindi in terms of Section 3(3) of Official Languages Act, 1963. One employee of this office has been nominated for Hindi training "Praveen" conducted by Central Hindi Training Institute, Department of Official Language. 'HINDI PAKHWADA' was also observed in this Branch Secretariat with great enthusiasm during 14-29 September 2023. The Hindi Diwas was attended on 14th September, 2023 by one Section Officer and Junior Translation Officer of this Office at Pune. The Conference on Joint Regional Official Language conference for East and North-East Regions, 2024 at Siliguri and Hindi Kavi Sammelan in Kolkata were attended by one Assistant Section Officer and Junior Hindi Translator of this office. Required reports were being forwarded on regular basis in the prescribed proforma to the Main Secretariat at New Delhi as well.

Photograph of Employees during Hindi Pakhwada, 2023



- 17.15 The Budget and Accounts related work in the Branch Secretariat, Kolkata are being done online using the portal-based payment system i.e. 'Public Financial Management System' (PFMS) developed by NIC. All payments to employees, Government Counsel and other service providers

are being made online through PFMS portal. Periodical reports are directly submitted to Pay & Accounts Office and other Public Authorities online. For procurement of Goods, Stationeries and other Services, Government e-procurement website <https://gem.gov.in> is being used extensively for direct procurement as well as procurement through Bids. Pension cases are being processed through 'Bhavishya' online portal.

- 17.16 The Library of this Branch Secretariat, Kolkata, containing more than 10000 books and journals, is proving its worthiness and is very helpful for use in Litigation and also adhering advice as well to Government Ministries/Departments. Online Journals 'Live Law', 'Manupatra' and 'SCC Online' have also been subscribed by this Branch Secretariat.
- 17.17 The Legal Information Management & Briefing System (LIMBS) portal is functional in the Branch Secretariat, Kolkata w.e.f. 1st January, 2022. The Panel Counsel registered their names in the LIMBS portal to enable them to upload the Orders of the Court and claim fee. Instructions have also been issued to different Ministries/Departments to upload the cases in the LIMBS portal and to provide the LIMBS ID in the references made to the Branch Secretariat, Kolkata. A total of 5,819 numbers of bills have been received during 1st January, 2023 to 31st March, 2024 through LIMBS portal from Panel Counsels.
- 17.18 The Officers and employees of Branch Secretariat, Kolkata strive to provide the best service to all the stakeholders including Panel Counsel, Ministries/ Departments, other Government organization and general public at large being litigant as and when approached by them, wellbeing & welfare measures for its employees. We have facilitated panel counsels and litigant Departments through digitization expedited the process of dispensation of Justice to public at large.
- 17.19 International Yoga Day has been observed by the Branch Secretariat, Kolkata on 21st June, 2023.

Photographs during the International Yoga Day on 21.06.2023



- 17.20 This Branch Secretariat has celebrated **National Sports Day, 2023 on 25.08.2023 by playing Badminton and on 29.08.2023 by playing cricket.**

Photograph of employees playing Badminton



- 17.21 During Special Campaign 3.0 as per direction of Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances a total of 4414 files have been reviewed for weeding out. Also, 5900 kgs of old and discarded papers have been sold for an amount of Rs.81088/-. Furthermore, 600 sq. Ft of space have been freed by removing scrap materials.

A photograph of employees performing cleanliness work





17.22 'Vigilance Awareness Week' has been observed during the period 31st October, 2023 to 6th November, 2023. Integrity Pledge on 'Vigilance Awareness Week' was administered by In-charge, Branch Secretariat, Kolkata on said occasion on 30th October, 2023.

A photograph taken during reading of Integrity Pledge



17.23 Constitution Day was observed in this Branch Secretariat wherein the employees read the Preamble of the Constitution.

18. BRANCH SECRETARIAT BENGALURU

18.1 The Branch Secretariat, Bengaluru has jurisdiction over the States of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Telangana, and UT of Puducherry in handling litigation and advice of various Central Government Departments / Ministries. The Branch Secretariat is headed by an Additional Government Advocate who functions as In-Charge.

18.2 **Advice Work:** The Branch Secretariat renders legal advice to all the Central Government Departments and offices located in the States of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Telangana, and UT of Puducherry. During the period from 01.01.2023 to 31.03.2024, 835 references were received for legal advice. The advice work includes scrutiny and vetting of pleadings i.e., statements of objections, counter affidavits to be filed before the High Courts i.e., The High Court of Andhra Pradesh at Amaravathi, High Court of Karnataka at Bengaluru, Benches of High Court of Karnataka at Dharwad and Kalburagi and the High Court for the State of Telangana at Hyderabad, respectively, reply statement filed before Central Administrative Tribunals (CAT) at Bengaluru and Hyderabad benches, respectively, written statement, counter affidavits, counter statements, filed before District Courts, Subordinate Courts and various other Tribunals.

They also provide guidance on examining the feasibility of filing SLP, Appeals, review, etc. interpretation of laws by guiding Departments on the legal sustainability of their action, and holding discussions with the Administrative Departments, whenever necessary.

18.3 **Supervising Litigation:** The Branch Secretariat supervises the entire litigation of the Central Government Departments and offices in the High Court of Andhra Pradesh at Amaravathi, High Court of Karnataka, Bengaluru, Benches of High Court of Karnataka at Dharwad & Kalburagi and High Court for the State of Telangana at Hyderabad, Subordinate Courts located at Bengaluru City and most of the districts of Karnataka, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, CAT in these States and UT of Puducherry. This Branch Secretariat also looks after the work of Government litigation in the District Consumer Dispute Redressal Fora, the State Consumer Redressal Commissions of the respective States, Central Govt. Industrial Tribunal and Debt Recovery Tribunal. About 6308 litigation references, which include nomination of counsel, counsel fee bills, and general correspondence relating to litigation, were received during the period from 01.01.2023 to 31.03.2024. The function of the Branch Secretariat in this regard includes engagement/nomination of the Counsel and distribution of cases among the Central Government Counsels.

18.4 **Fee Bills of Counsels:** This Branch Secretariat processes counsel fee bills and pays the fees directly from its centralized funds to the Deputy Solicitor General of India and Central Government Counsel in the High Court of Karnataka, Bengaluru. About 548 fee bills were received by the Branch Secretariat during the period from 01.01.2023 to 31.03.2024. So far as the Benches of the High Court of Karnataka at Dharwad and Kalburagi are concerned, the counsel fee bill is borne by the Departments / Ministries concerned on whose behalf the Counsel conducts the cases and not by the Branch Secretariat, Bengaluru. The Departments / Ministries concerned pay the fee for Central Government panel Counsel in CAT, District, and Subordinate Courts. Hence this Branch Secretariat is not certifying counsel fee bills. However, this Branch Secretariat, Bengaluru clarifies as and when requests are received in this regard.

18.5 EVENTS AT BRANCH SECRETARIAT, BENGALURU:

- 18.5.1 International Yoga Day:** International Yoga Day was celebrated by the employees of the Branch Secretariat, Bengaluru by performing Yoga collectively. The significance of performing Yoga was discussed along with the benefits associated with it. All the employees were encouraged to incorporate the same in their respective daily routines.
- 18.5.2 Observance of Hindi Fortnight:** The Branch Secretariat, Department of Legal Affairs, Bengaluru celebrated the Hindi Fortnight by conducting various competitions for the officers and staff. All participants actively participated with enthusiasm in 5 competitions. The competitions were organised with the assistance of the Assistant Director of the Hindi Teaching Scheme, Ministry of Home Affairs, Bengaluru who judged the competitions and delivered a speech on the valedictory function, and distributed prizes to the winners.
- 18.5.3 Vigilance Awareness Week:** The Branch Secretariat observed Vigilance Awareness Week, 2023. The Integrity Pledge was administered by Shri K. Sudarshana, Additional Government Advocate & In-Charge on 26th October, 2023. All the officials attended the event and took the oath of Integrity Pledge.
- 18.5.4 Rashtriya Ekta Diwas:** The Rashtriya Ekta Diwas Pledge was administered by Shri K. Sudarshana, Additional Government Advocate & In-Charge in his chamber on 31.10.2023. All the officials attended the event and took the oath of the National Unity Pledge.
- 18.6 RIGHT TO INFORMATION ACT, 2005:** All the RTI Applications received in the Branch Secretariat, Bengaluru are handled and disposed of within the time frame stipulated under the RTI Act. An Assistant Legal Adviser is designated as the CPIO and the Additional Government Advocate & In-Charge is designated as the First Appellate Authority.
- 18.7 SPECIAL CAMPAIGN 3.0:** With reference to the directions of the Cabinet Secretariat and Department of Legal Affairs' Order No.A-60011/70/21-Admn.IV dated 11.09.2023, more than 1300 old files in this Branch Secretariat were identified and weeded out during the Special Campaign 3.0.

19. BRANCH SECRETARIAT, CHENNAI

- 19.1** The Branch Secretariat, Chennai is headed by an Assistant Legal Adviser / Deputy Legal Adviser.
- 19.2 ADVICE:** The Branch Secretariat renders legal advice to all Central Government Offices located in the States of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and the Union Territory of Puducherry.
- 19.3** Around 1117 references have been received for advice and disposed of.
- 19.4 LITIGATION:** The Branch Secretariat, Chennai looks after the entire litigation work of the Central Government (except cases relating to Railways, Income-Tax, Central Excise and Customs, etc.) in the High Court of Madras, Madurai Bench of Madras High Court and High Court of Kerala. It also looks after the Central Government litigation work in the City Civil Courts, Presidency Courts of Small Causes, Subordinate Courts, Tribunals, Consumer Fora, etc. in Tamil Nadu and Kerala. Besides, the Branch Secretariat, Chennai has also been entrusted with the work of Central Government litigation before the Madras Bench of the Central Administrative Tribunal at Chennai and the Ernakulam Bench of the Central Administrative Tribunal in Kerala.

- 19.5 During the given period about 9793 litigation matters were received and disposed of accordingly which include litigation receipts, fee bills and files opened for cases of High Court/CAT/LC etc.
- 19.6 The Branch Secretariat keeps the Ministries and Departments of the Central Government informed about the important developments of their cases as well as the results of the litigation with suitable advice for further action, if required. Pleadings, affidavits, etc., to be filed in the Courts/ Tribunals / Consumer Fora / Arbitration matters in Tamil Nadu and Kerala are scrutinized and vetted at the draft stage. Functions of the Branch Secretariat, Chennai also include engagement/nomination of the Counsel and collection of materials from the Central Government Departments involved in the cases for being passed on to the Counsel after necessary scrutiny of the documents from the legal angle.
- 19.7 **LIMBS:** Branch Secretariat, Chennai is utilizing the LIMBS web-based application created by the Department of Legal Affairs, Ministry of Law & Justice, which is a single- point access to streamline the procedure of conducting Central Govt. litigation matters. At present details of various Court Cases listed in the Principal Bench of Madras High Court & its Madurai Bench that are handled by the Branch Secretariat, Chennai are being updated periodically in the LIMBS portal for use by various stakeholders.
- 19.8 **COUNSEL FEE BILLS:** The Branch Secretariat makes payment of professional fees from the funds allocated for this purpose, directly to the Additional Solicitor General of India, Deputy Solicitor General, Senior Panel Counsel, and the Central Government Standing Counsel in respect of cases pertaining to the Principal Bench of Madras High Court & its Madurai Bench.
- 19.9 During the relevant period, around **3040** fee bills pertaining to central government litigation in the High Court of Madras and Madurai Bench were processed and an amount to the tune of **Rs. 5.95 Crore** was paid to Central Govt. Panel Counsel. The above amount includes payment towards Retainer Fees to the Standing Government Counsel of District & Subordinate Courts in Tamil Nadu & Puducherry for handling central government litigation.
- 19.10 Fee Bills preferred by the Central Government Counsel for appearance before the Central Administrative Tribunal and Subordinate Courts were dealt with and sent to the Departments concerned for payment, as per OM issued by the Department of Legal Affairs, New Delhi.
- 19.11 **Observation of ‘International Day of Yoga’ on 21st June, 2023:** As per the directions of the Main Secretariat, a demonstration session of about one hour was conducted on 21.06.2023 in connection with the Yoga Day celebrations to avail multiple physical and mental health benefits.
- 19.12 **Observance of ‘Hindi Pakhwada’ in September 2023:** In accordance with directives of the Department of Official Language, Main Secretariat, Hindi Pakhwada was observed in this office in September 2023. In order to encourage usage of Hindi in day-to-day official work, various competitions were conducted under the guidance of the Deputy Director, Hindi Teaching Scheme, Chennai. All officers/officials of the Branch Secretariat participated with enthusiasm in these competitions and other related activities. During the prize distribution function, the then ALA & In-Charge and the Deputy Director, of Hindi Teaching Scheme provided valuable suggestions to improve usage of Hindi in day-to-day official work.

- 19.13. Celebration of 13th Indian Organ Donation Day:** To commemorate the celebration of the 13th Indian Organ Donation Day, a 'Pledge' taking ceremony was organized in this Branch Secretariat, Chennai to spread awareness about organ donation, and the prescribed 'Pledge' was administered by ALA & In-charge at the premises of this office to all the officers & officials at 11.30 am on 03.08.2023.
- 19.14 Observance of 'VIGILANCE AWARENESS WEEK':** As per CVC guidelines, 'VIGILANCE AWARENESS WEEK' with the theme "Corruption-free India for a developed Nation" was observed in this Branch Secretariat as per the guidelines of the Central Vigilance Commission from 30th October to 5th November, 2023.
- 19.15 'Integrity pledge' was administered to all officials of this Branch Secretariat on 30th October, 2023 at 11.00A.M and mail in this regard has been sent to the Main Secretariat.
- 19.16 Special Cleanliness Campaign 3.0 conducted in October 2023:** As directed by the Dept. of Legal Affairs a Special/Cleanliness Campaign 3.0 was organized in this Branch Secretariat and the cleanliness campaign was carried out in full swing during the month of October 2023. A consolidated report of the activities undertaken and implemented by this office during the Special Campaign 3.0 in the month of October 2023 along with photographs taken in this regard were submitted to the Co-ordination Cell of the Main Secretariat for consideration and inclusion in the consolidated report of the Ministry.
- 19.17 '**Swaccha Bharath**' Mission: The In-charge of this Branch Secretariat has been periodically monitoring and inspecting the cleanliness activities of the office. Given the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic situation, top priority has been accorded to cleanliness of office premises, hand sanitization, wearing of face masks, social distancing, etc.
- 19.18 Retainer Fees:** Out of its allotted funds, the Branch Secretariat has been entrusted with the mandate of paying Retainer Fees to the Standing Government Counsel of District & Subordinate Courts in Tamil Nadu & Puducherry. During the relevant period, an amount of **Rs.22.32 Lakh** was paid towards payment of Retainer Fees to Standing Government Counsel. The above amount has been included in the total Counsel Fee payments referred to in Para IV above.
- 19.19 Implementation of e-office:** This office has already implemented an e-Office as per the directions of the Main Secretariat. Since **April 2023**, most of the new files of the Administration Division have been opened and processed in the e-Office module. The remaining physical files opened after 01.04.2023 including Counsel Fee payment files have been converted into e-Files. All bills including Counsel Fee bills and claims of officials of this Branch Secretariat are processed through PFMS and payments are directly credited to the bank accounts of the concerned vendors/beneficiaries. Necessary modifications have been incorporated in the 'LITCASE' software under the guidance of concerned NIC personnel, so that information/data related to Fee Bill receipts and their disposal are duly updated.
- 19.20 RTI receipts:** During the above period, **48 RTI applications** were received which included online, physical, and cases transferred from Other Public Authorities. **6 RTI appeals** were received during the period from 1.1.2023 to 31.03.2024.

19.21 Female employees: 3 female employees are working in this office, viz., 1 Section Officer (CSS), 1 Private Secretary (CSSS), and 1 Assistant Section Officer (CSS).

19.22 Statistics of Employees working under the following categories: 5 employees are falling under various categories other than General Category employees, i.e., SC-1; ST-1; OBC-3 [includes Ex-Servicemen - 1]; PH-0

20. LITIGATION (LOWER COURT) SECTION, TIS HAZARI, DELHI

20.1 The Litigation work in the various District Courts as well as Consumer Forum/Tribunals in Delhi/ New Delhi on behalf of all Ministries/Departments of the Government of India except the Income-tax Department is handled by the Litigation (LC) Section. The Litigation work, in the above-said Courts/Tribunals is looked after by an Assistant Legal Adviser & In-Charge, who is Assisted by a Superintendent (Legal)/ Assistant (Legal).

20.2 There is a panel of Senior Panel Counsels and Additional Central Government Counsels (i.e. **94 Senior Panel Counsels & 233 A.C.G.C**) nominated to contest the Cases on behalf of the Union of India, i.e. Government of India. On receipt of a request from the Administrative Ministry/ Department, action is taken to engage a suitable Govt. Counsel to appear on their behalf in the Courts. During the period (April 2023 –March 2024) under report, this Section engaged Counsels in **1242 Cases**. Close liaison is maintained with the various departments as well as Govt. Counsels at all times to safeguard the interest of the Government (Union of India) in the District Courts/ Consumer Forums/Tribunals.

20.3 When Cases are decided by the Hon'ble Courts, the Govt. Counsels submit their fee bills in a prescribed format. The fee bills are scrutinized very carefully, having regard to the terms and conditions of their appointment before certifying and making payment at the prescribed rates. The period (April 2023- March 2024) under report, this Section **received 332 fee bills** from Government Counsel/Senior panel Counsels. For **finance year 2023-24**, this Section has allocated a budget of Rs. **1,30,00,000/-** (One Crore and Thirty Lakh Rupees only). Out of this amount **Rs. 57,52,550/-** (Fifty-Seven Lakh Fifty-Two Thousand Five hundred fifty only) has been paid to **106 Panel Counsels** for their **436 Professional Fee Bills** for the period of 01.04.2023 to 31.03.2024.

20.4 The Assistant Legal Adviser who is the Branch Officer of this Section. He has been designated as Central Public Information Officer under the Right to Information Act, 2005. The Superintendent (Legal) who supervises the Litigation (LC) Section.

21. CENTRAL AGENCY SECTION:

21.1 Central Agency Section (CAS) was set up in the year 1950. This office is responsible for conducting litigation before the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India on behalf of all Ministries / Departments of the Central Government and also on behalf of the National Capital Territory of Delhi, Union Territories (excluding Pondicherry), the office of the Comptroller & Auditor General of India and all field offices under CAG. Special Leave Petitions and Appeals in certain matters on behalf of Union of India are filed after obtaining the opinion of Law Officers on the feasibility of filing Special Leave Petitions/Appeals in the Supreme Court through the Central Agency Section. During the Financial Year 2023-24, the Law Secretary functioned as in charge of, the Central Agency Section. He was assisted by 01 Senior Government Advocate, 02 Addl. Government Advocates, 03 Deputy

Government Advocates, and 02 Consultants (out of these 7 are Advocates-on-Record). There are 07 Law Officers and 1029 Legal Government Panel Counsels. The Central Agency Section functions from the Supreme Court Compound, New Delhi.

21.2 The functions of the Central Agency Section are as under:

- References of the Ministries/ Departments of Government of India received through the Department of Legal Affairs, Ministry of Law and Justice to obtain the opinion of Ld. Attorney General, Ld. Solicitor General and Ld. Additional Solicitor Generals.
- Engagement of Law Officers / approved Panel Counsels for various cases.
- Conduct and supervise litigation on behalf of the Union of India/ NCT of Delhi, C & AG, and Union Territories in the Supreme Court of India.
- Supervision of Record and payment of fee bills of Law Officers, Panel Counsels, Computer Typists, and Photocopy Machine Operators.

21.3 Government Advocates in the Central Agency Section require the qualification of Advocate-on-Record of the Supreme Court. They act, plead and appear before the Supreme Court in matters pertaining to the Union of India, NCT of Delhi, C&AG, and Union Territories as per the Supreme Court Rules.

21.4 As per the computerized record of Central Agency Section during the period from 01.03.2023 to 31.03.2024, the Central Agency Section has received 4136 references for advice/opinion from various Ministries/Departments of Government of India, NCT of Delhi, CAG and Union Territories in which the Union of India or Union Territories are either petitioner or respondent and 5798 new cases have been filed during this period.

S. No.	Description	Number of Cases
1.	Number of references received in CAS for seeking Legal opinion for filing SLP during the year 2023-24	4136 (917 through physical files and 3219 through e-files)
2.	Number of cases filed in the year 2023-24	5798
3.	Number of cases decided in the year 2023-24	101

* Data collected from Legal Information Management and Briefing System (LIMBS).

21.5 Some of the important decisions in favour of Govt. of India in the year 2023-24 are:

Sl. No.	Case Details	Issue Involved	Judgement
1.	Diary No. 23592/2023 – Vishal Tiwari Vs UOI	Installation of safety systems, improving quality of tracks, training, and sensitization of staff, reforms in maintenance practices, and development of Kavach system in Indian	We have perused the status report filed by the learned Attorney General for India. We find that multiple steps towards installation of safety systems, improving the quality of tracks, training and sensitization of staff, reforms in maintenance practices and

		Railways.	development of the Kavach System, which is a highly technology-intensive system, have been initiated. We appreciate the above-mentioned steps taken by the Indian Railways. That being so, we are satisfied that the initiation of these proceedings in the public interest has achieved the purpose and the issues have been adequately addressed by the Union of India and the Railways. We have no reason to doubt that the Union of India/Indian Railways will continue to take the desired steps for the modernization of the Indian Railways and for the implementation of the Kavach system in a manner as may be found appropriate by the experts. With these observations, the instant writ petition stands disposed of at this stage.
2.	SLP (Crl.) Nos. 12779-12781 of 2022 Y. Balaji vs Karthik Desari and Another	Whether Directorate of Enforcement has power to issue summons to the accused persons and investigate the matters u/s 50 of PML Act is there men's rea and incriminating evidence available against the Accused persons?	The appeals arising out of the order of the Division Bench of the High Court are liable to be allowed. Accordingly, these appeals are allowed and the order of the Division Bench of the Madras High Court dated 01.09.2022 is set aside. ED will now be entitled to proceed further from the stage at which their hands were tied by the impugned order.
3.	SLP (Crl.) no. 8847/2023 Saumya Chaurasia vs Directorate of Enforcement	Whether the fundamental rights of the Petitioner under Article 21 of the Constitution of India, 1950 have been seriously prejudiced by the High Court delaying the disposal of the Bail Application and the Petitioner being forced to stay in judicial custody for more than 7 months?	In the instant case, there is neither discharge nor acquittal nor quashing of the criminal case by the court of competent jurisdiction against Suryakant Tiwari in the predicate/ scheduled offence. Since the Court has found that there was an attempt made by and on behalf of the Appellant to misrepresent the facts by making incorrect statements in the appeal for assailing the impugned order passed by the High Court, the appeal deserves to be dismissed.
4.	CIVIL APPEAL NO(S). 11128 OF 2016 C.I.T., DELHIVS. BHARTI HEXACOM LTD ETC DATED 16.10.2023	Issue-The controversy in these cases revolve around variable license fees paid by the respondent- assesses to the Department of Tele-communications (hereinafter referred to as "DoT", for short)	Held: The payment post 31 July, 1999 is a continuation of the payment pre-31 July, 1999 albeit in an altered format which does not take away the essence of the payment. It is a mandatory payment traceable to the foundational document i.e., the license agreement as modified post migration to the

		under the New Telecom Policy of 1999 (Policy of 1999) is revenue expenditure in nature and is to be allowed a deduction under Section 37 of the Act, or, whether the same is capital in nature, Section 35ABB of the Act.	1999 policy. A Consequence of non-payment would result in the ouster of the licensee from the trade. Thus, this is a payment which is intrinsic to the existence of the license as well as trade itself. Such a payment has to be treated or characterized as capital only.
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21.6 PAYMENT OF PANEL COUNSEL FEE: With implementation Legal Information Management and Briefing System (*LIMBS*) in CAS, payment of the panel counsel fee has become online. The dockets/work orders are now issued through LIMBS. Law Officers/Panel Counsels, Panel Typists/ Photocopiers submit their bills online and subsequently, the bills are processed on the PFMS portal. The panel counsels are paid their fees as per the rates prescribed by the Government. An amount of Rs. 39,99,47,657/- has been paid to Law Officers and Panel Counsels in the Financial Year 2023-24.

21.7 COURT FEE: In case where large amounts of court fee are required to be paid the concerned Ministries/Departments are making arrangements for payment of court fee through M/s Stock Holding Corporation of India Limited (SHCIL). However, for smaller amounts of court fees, the Central Agency Section has entered into an arrangement for e-payment of court fees with Stock Holding Corporation of India Limited (SHCIL). The total payment of Court Fee in the Financial Year 2023-24 is Rs.59000/- (approx.).

21.8 PAYMENT OF COMPUTER TYPIST/PHOTOSTAT OPERATORS:

A panel of Computer Typists/ Photostat Machine Operators has been constituted for discharging the work relating to litigation. The bills are submitted through LIMBS and the payment of their bills is made after scrutiny from all aspects. Total payment made to Typist & Photostat Operators during the Financial Year 2023-24 is **Rs.1,90,52,343/-**.

21.9 BUDGET FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2023-24: The budget allocation for the financial year 2023-24 is Rs.51.50 Crores which includes Rs.41.9 Crores for Professional Head.

21.10 Library, Central Agency Section: Central Agency Section maintains a Library which maintains various kinds of books e.g. Law Books, Bare Acts, Newspapers, Magazines, etc. **Central Agency Section also** procures many updated law books/Bare Acts as per the demand of the officers. SCC online for 5 users is timely renewed. Routine work like the issue of books, payment of various bills, an order placed for law books, clipping of news on the Supreme Court and legal research from online software, etc. are also done accordingly

21.11 ACHIEVEMENTS OF CAS DURING THE YEAR 2023-24

- I. Central Agency Section (CAS) has shifted to E-Office Regime. Further, all the Officers/ Officials in Litigation Units of CAS have been instructed to send all the files relating to Court Cases to all the concerned Law Officers/Panel Counsels through E-Office or as soft copy through email only instead of physical files.

- II. CAS has undertaken the task of disposal (through auction) of all digitized physical files and steel racks in which they were stored; to clear the space (1200 sq. ft area approximately) these files are consuming in the record rooms of the Central Agency Section. For this purpose, CAS has engaged the auctioneer and selected the highest bidder, and is in the process of disposal of these files and racks.
- III. A Unified Software Legal Information Management and Briefing System (*LIMBS*) has been implemented in CAS. With the implementation of this web-based application (i.e. *LIMBS*), CAS has done away with manual acceptance of bills and related documents from Law Officers and Panel Advocates and processing these bills manually and has shifted to a digitized form of working. Now the dockets/work orders are being issued mandatorily through *LIMBS*, bills and related documents are being submitted by Law Officers/Panel Counsels/Panel Typists/Photocopiers through *LIMBS* and payments to the concerned are also being made through *LIMBS* only.
- IV. In addition, e-HRMS (Human Resource Management System) has also been implemented in CAS for digitizing HR processes in this office.

21.12 EVENTS AND SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVITY IN CAS:

1. Inauguration of Gymnasium in the basement of ISIL building in the Central Agency Section by the Hon'ble Minister Law & Justice Shri Kiren Rijiju in May 2023: -
2. Celebration of International Yoga Day, 2023 in the Basement of ISIL Building, the Central Agency Section.



3. 100 Indoor plants have been placed in the Central Agency Section for the purpose of Beautification of CAS under the Swacchta Action Plan 2023.



(A picture of the Gallery of the Central Agency Section).

4. A Pledge Taking Ceremony was organized by the Central Agency Section on the occasion of Rashtriya Ekta Diwas (31st October 2023) to reinforce and reaffirm our commitment towards unity, integrity, and security of our country.

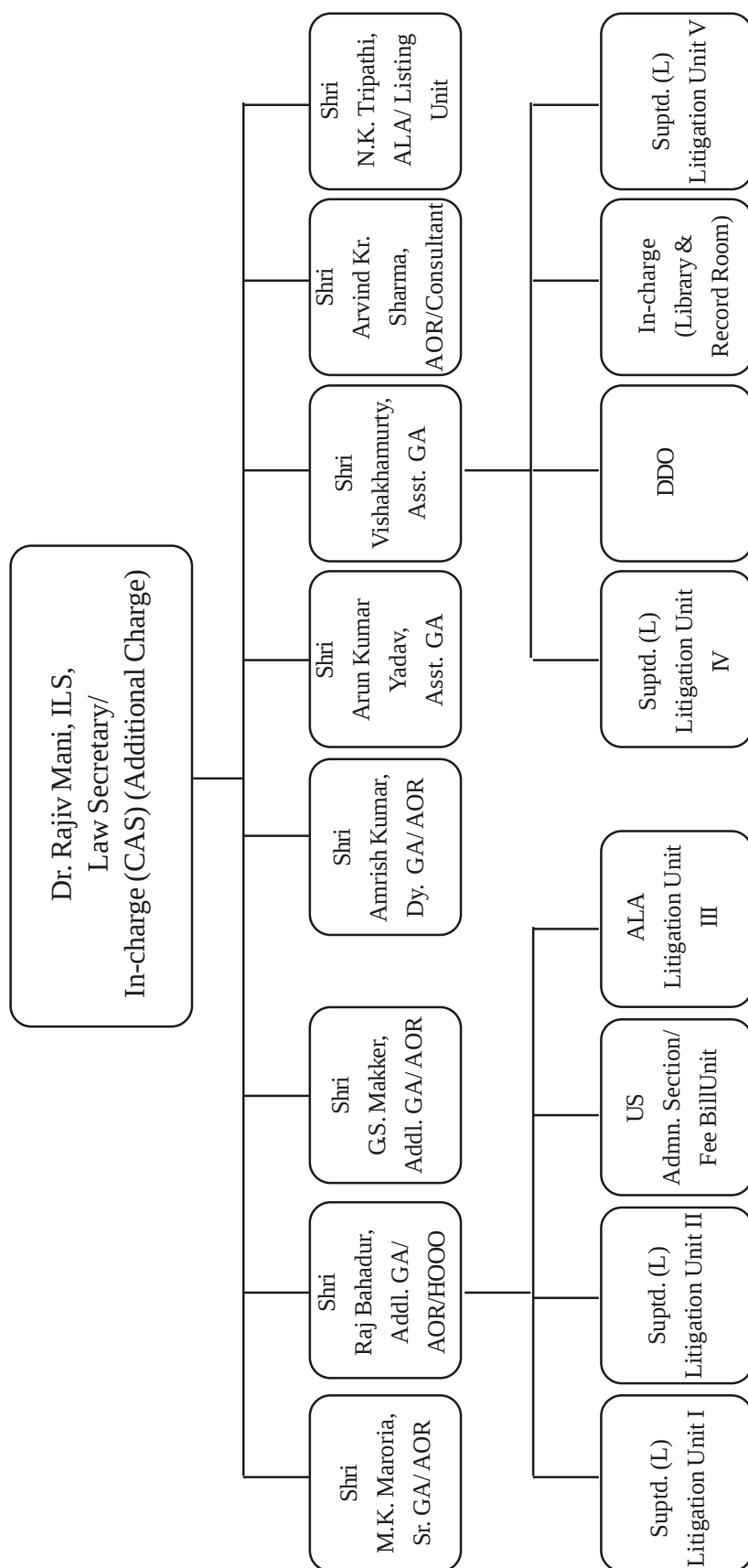


(A picture of Secretary & In-Charge, CAS taking pledge along with the Officers & staff of CAS.)



(A picture of Shri M K Maroria, Sr. Govt. Advocate taking pledge with his staff.)

20.13 A Flow-Chart of Organizational Set-Up of Central Agency Section for 2023-24: -



INCOME-TAX APPELLATE TRIBUNAL

Origin

Section 252 of the Income-tax Act, 1961 provides that the Central Government shall constitute an Appellate Tribunal consisting of as many Judicial Members and Accountant Members as it thinks fit, to exercise the powers and discharge the functions conferred on the Appellate Tribunal by the said Act. The Income-tax Appellate Tribunal was established on 25th January, 1941, in pursuance of a similar provision contained in the erstwhile Indian Income-tax Act, 1922.

Constitution

As per the Tribunal Reforms Act, 2021 and the Rules framed thereunder, vide notification G.S.R. 635(E) dated 15th September 2021 issued by the Ministry of Finance (Department of Revenue), New Delhi; a person shall not be qualified for appointment as,

- (a) *President* unless he is a sitting or retired Judge of a High Court and who has completed not less than seven years of service as a Judge in a High Court or a Vice-President of the Income-tax Appellate Tribunal;
- (b) *Vice-President*, unless he has been a member; and
- (c) *Judicial Member*, unless,
 - (i) he has, for a combined period of ten years, been a District Judge and Additional District Judge; or
 - (ii) he has been a member of the Indian Legal Service with ten years of experience in litigation and has held the post of Additional Secretary or any equivalent or higher post for two years; or
 - (iii) he has been an advocate for ten years with substantial experience in litigation under Income-tax laws in Income-tax Appellate Tribunal, High Court, or Supreme Court;
- (d) *Accountant Member*, unless,
 - (i) he has for twenty-five years been in the practice of accountancy,
 - (A) as a chartered accountant under the Chartered Accountants Act, 1949 (38 of 1949); or
 - (B) as a registered accountant under any law formerly in force; or partly as such registered accountant and partly as a chartered accountant; or
 - (ii) he has been a member of the Indian Revenue Service (Income-tax Service Group 'A') and has held the post of Principal Commissioner of Income-tax or any equivalent or higher post and has performed judicial, quasi-judicial or adjudicating functions for three years.

Bench Strength

As constituted presently, the Tribunal consists of 63 Benches. For 63 Benches spread over 30 stations (including 02 Circuit Benches) throughout the country, the present sanctioned strength of Members is 126 including one (01) President and ten (10) Zonal Vice-Presidents. The present position of sanctioned, filled up, and vacant post as of 31.03.2024 is as under: -

S.No.	Posts	Sanctioned	Filled up	Vacant
1	President	01	01	00
2	Vice-President	10	07	03
3	Accountant Member	63	55	08
4	Judicial Member	63	60	03
	TOTAL	126*	115**	11***

* Including 01 President and 10 Vice-Presidents.

** including 01 President and 07 Vice-Presidents.

*** including 03 Vice-Presidents.

Powers and Functions

The Income-tax Appellate Tribunal, constituted under the Income-tax Act, deals with second appeals in all matters of direct taxes, including appeals against the revisionary orders of Administrative Commissioners as well as orders denying registration under Section 12A or Section 80G of the Income-tax Act 1961, etc. The Appellate Tribunal also deals with second appeals in all matters of the Black Money (Undisclosed foreign income and assets) and imposition of Tax Act, 2015 including any revisionary order passed by the Principal Commissioner/Commissioner under the Black Money (Undisclosed Foreign Income and Assets) and Imposition of Tax Act, 2015.

The powers and functions of the Appellate Tribunal are exercised and discharged by the Benches constituted by the President of the Tribunal from amongst the Members thereof. Generally, a Bench consists of one Judicial Member and one Accountant Member. However, in appropriate cases, at the discretion of the President, a Bench may consist of more than two Members. The President or any other Member of Tribunal authorized in this behalf by the Central Government may, sitting singly, dispose of any case which has been allotted to the Bench of which he is a Member and which pertains to an assessee whose total income as computed by the Assessing Officer in that case does not exceed fifty (50) lakhs rupees and the President may, for the disposal of any particular case, constitute a Special Bench consisting of three or more Members, one of whom shall necessarily be a Judicial Member and one Accountant Member, subject to the provisions of the Income-tax Act, 1961.

Procedure and Rules

The Appellate Tribunal has the power to regulate its procedure and the procedure of its Benches in all matters arising out of the exercise of its powers or in the discharge of its functions, including the places at which the Benches shall hold their sittings.

The Appellate Tribunal has, accordingly, framed its own rules called the Income-tax (Appellate Tribunal) Rules, 1963. The said Rules are best suited for the expeditious disposal of all matters pending before the Appellate Tribunal.

The Appellate Tribunal functions as the final fact-finding authority not only in matters concerning income tax but also in all matters of taxation such as wealth tax, gift tax, etc. The Appellate Tribunal is manned by efficient personnel discharging their functions to the best of their ability and balancing the scale of justice evenly between the taxpayer and the Revenue, without fear or Favor.

The matters, that the Appellate Tribunal disposes, are of vital importance involving revenue to the tune of several crores. The Tribunal is entrusted with the responsible task of deciding intricate questions of law and fact. The presence of both the Judicial and Accountant Members ensures that Questions of Law and facts, which arise for consideration are properly enquired into and that the accountancy point, as well as the legal angle, are weighed properly. The Appellate Tribunal allows the representatives of both parties to appear before it and invariably hears them before passing any order. The Members hear the parties, peruse the evidence on record, make their notes, refer to the authorities cited at the Bar, confer among themselves, and then pass final orders. The procedure, which ensures that Questions of fact and law are properly and judicially decided, is by itself a succour to the parties, and inferences drawn by the Tribunals are found to be beyond reproach.

Pendency of Appeals

At the beginning of year 2023 i.e. 01.01.2023, the Pendency of the appeals was **38311** and up to 31.03.2024 the number of appeals pending in the Income-tax Appellate Tribunal stands at **38759**.

It may be seen from the following table that the commitment to reduce pendency is showing encouraging results:

Year	Institution	Disposal	Pendency at the end of the year
2019	50991	53160	89412
2020	14617	24256	79754
2021	15046	40473	54315
2022	21364	39096	38311
2023	29126	33008	34429
2024 (Jan., 24 to Mar.,24)	10904	6574	38759

Efforts for reduction of pendency

Necessary instructions have already been issued to all the Benches to scrutinize and identify cases that are covered by decisions of I.T.A.T., High Courts, and the Supreme Court and post them on a priority basis. This includes group and small matters. The members of the Bar have also been requested to bring all such covered cases to the notice of I.T.A.T., for out-of-turn posting. Besides, appeals dealing with Search & Seizure matters and appeals against orders passed under Section 263 by the administrative Commissioners

are also given priority at their disposal. Similarly, appeals against the denial of registration to charitable institutions under Section 12A and denial of recognition under Section 80 G are also given priority. Appeals of Senior Citizens are also taken up for priority hearing, wherever the Tribunal is so approached. Further, as per the amendment made in the Income Tax Act 1961 by the Finance Act 2015, now the appeal involving assessed income up to Rs. 50 lakhs can be heard by Single Member Bench. The said amendment has further in the speedy disposal of cases. The pendency figure of Single Member Cases is as under: -

Month	Total Pendency
January, 2023	3009
February, 2023	2960
March, 2023	2941
April, 2023	3006
May, 2023	3034
June, 2023	2892
July, 2023	2935
August, 2023	2976
September, 2023	2857
October, 2023	2852
November, 2023	3074
December, 2023	3430
January, 2024	3834
February, 2024	4359
March, 2024	4830

The pendency figure of Wealth Tax Cases is as under: -

Month	Total Pendency
January, 2023	89
February, 2023	68
March, 2023	64
April, 2023	69
May, 2023	80
June, 2023	77
July, 2023	72
August, 2023	50
September, 2023	51
October, 2023	51
November, 2023	65
December, 2023	63
January, 2024	63
February, 2024	51
March, 2024	56

Out of 126 sanctioned posts of Members, required for running 63 Benches of the ITAT, 115 posts of Members are filled up, 37 (Judicial and Accountant) Member has joined in the month of March, 2024 & April, 2024. Despite all the constraints imposed by Covid-19 pandemic, the Tribunal made serious and honest attempts to continue with dispensing impartial, easy and speedy justice to the tax litigants. For this purpose, the Tribunal started hearing of cases through Video Conferencing. The Court Room hearing by way of Video Conferencing were devised and carried out by the existing staff of the ITAT and no outside expert agency was utilized. The system of virtual court hearing has yielded satisfactory results.

COMPUTERIZATION

The process of computerization started in the Income Tax Appellate Tribunal in early 2000 and in recent years, this process has gained great momentum with several innovative projects being implemented in the day-to-day activities of the Tribunal. Over the years, various projects have been undertaken and implemented by the Tribunal to live up to its motto “**Nishpaksh Sulabh Satvar Nyay**”. The details of such projects are as under: -

- (a) **ITAT Online Project:** This project was the first initiative to automate the process of judicial administration in the Tribunal starting from receipt and registration of appeals and applications up to the disposal and uploading of Tribunal orders. This project was commissioned and implemented in all Benches of the Tribunal in a phased manner. ITAT Online is a web-based application that can be accessed from anywhere and anytime. Now all Benches of ITAT have been connected to the ITAT Online database and activities like registration, data Updation, Tribunal order uploading, etc., are carried out through the web application. Web-cum-Database Server of this project has been set up in the National Informatics Centre Cloud Server.
- (a) **ITAT Official Website:** As an extension of the ITAT Online Project, the official website of the Income Tax Appellate Tribunal was redeveloped in 2016 and equipped to deliver judicial and general information to the public. The official website was redesigned to make it more user-friendly, informative, responsive, updated, and compliant with the Government of India's Guidelines for Websites. Dynamic information like Cause Lists, Constitution, Case Status, Order Search, and Pronouncement Search have been provided to cater to the judicial information needs of the litigants. Besides, static information like Holiday Lists, Tenders and Auctions, Notice Boards, and Right to Information are accessible to the litigants in particular, and to the public in general. This website is widely used and appreciated.
- (b) **Digital Display Boards:** As an innovative and eco-friendly step, physical notice boards have been replaced by digital notice boards at ITAT, Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, and Raipur Benches. Cause Lists, Constitutions, Friday lists, etc. are being digitally displayed on the digital notice boards.
- (c) **Launching of Mobile Application:** The Android version of the ITAT Judicial Information Portal has been developed and released for the benefit of appellants, respondents as well as their counsels. Owing to its simplicity and ease of use, the app has been very useful.
- (d) **JudiSIS Application:** JudiSIS is an internal desktop application developed in-house for managing various day-to-day judicial activities. JudiSIS enables the internal users to manage

cause lists, hearings, preparation of notices, send email communications, Updation of case status and publication of daily order sheet on the website, generation of periodical statements, etc.

- (e) **Budget and Expenditure Monitoring System:** For monitoring and consolidating the budget availability and expenditure position efficiently and accurately on a real-time basis, ITAT has implemented an online application namely Budget Man, developed by in-house talent. This application has enabled the Head Office to generate periodical budgetary statements with a click of a button.
- (f) **CCTV Cameras:** CCTV Cameras with audio and video recording facilities have been installed in courtrooms and other important entry points at all Benches of the Income Tax Appellate Tribunal.
- (g) **Infrastructure Up-gradation:** ITAT has always been conscious that better computerization needs better infrastructure. Accordingly, ITAT has been replacing the old and obsolete Computers, printers, and other equipment with the latest ones in a phased manner. All members of ITAT have already been provided with laptops for their official use. The Members of ITAT have also been equipped with dictation Software to assist in dictation of orders. Optic fibre-based high-speed internet connectivity is being provided at every bench to meet the bandwidth requirements of various projects and applications.
- (h) **Centralization:** It has been decided to Centralize the non-judicial function of subordinate Benches at the Zonal Headquarters for optimal utilization of human resources of ITAT. This arrangement of Centralization was initially started at Delhi and Bangalore Zonal Headquarters by taking over the work of Agra and Cochin Benches respectively w.e.f. 1st November, 2022.
- (i) **E-Filing Portal:** ITAT has launched the e-Filing Portal for facilitating electronic filing of appeals and applications, and petitions and documents therein, by the stakeholders. So far, over 7300 appeals by assesses and over 2700 appeals by the department have been filed through the e-Filing Portal.
- (j) **Publishing of Daily Orders:** As a major step in promoting transparency in judicial administration, ITAT has started publishing the daily orders passed by various Benches of the Tribunal on the official website. All the Members have started signing the daily order sheets generated by the JudiSIS software (an in-house internal judicial application). These daily orders appear in the case details page on ITAT Judicial Information Portal.
- (k) **ITAT Members' e-Library Portal:** ITAT Members' e-Library Portal was launched on 12th August 2022. This portal provides access to digital libraries of the Hon'ble Supreme Court, and various High Courts to the Members of the ITAT. This portal also provides seamless access to several tax portals.
- (l) **RTI Online Portal:** All Public Authorities of ITAT have been on-boarded on the RTI Online Portal (<https://rtionline.gov.in>) enabling the applicants to file their request for information and receive the response online.

- (m) **Electronic Communication of Hearing Notices, etc.:** ITAT commenced electronic Communication of Acknowledgement of Filing of Appeals, Hearing Notices, Defect Notices, etc. to the parties.
- (n) **Implementation of e-Office:** With the co-operation of the Department of Legal Affairs, E-Office software has been implemented in the ITAT for forwarding various proposals to the Department of Legal Affairs electronically. ITAT is also contemplating implementing e-Office and SPARROW for intra-organizational use.
- (o) **API linkage with LIMBS:** For the purpose of minimizing manual data entry, the LIMBS portal has been integrated through APIs with various Courts/Tribunals. Recently, the LIMBS portal has been linked with ITAT which shall facilitate seamless data transfer between the applications and shall help in auto Updation of records on the LIMBS portal pertaining to cases in ITAT.

RECENT ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE YEAR 2023-24

- (a) **Mandatory e-filing of Revenue Appeals:** In compliance with the directions of the Hon'ble Supreme Court, ITAT has implemented the mandatory e-filing of appeals, etc. by the Income Tax Department w.e.f. 30.06.2023. Between July and December 2023 more than 2,400 appeals and applications were filed by the Department through the e-Filing Portal.
- (b) **Paperless Courtrooms:** Consequent to the implementation of e-filing in the ITAT, the appeals and applications are filed in electronic form. This led to the setting up of Paperless Courtrooms. The essential software interface has been developed to allow members to access files seamlessly before, during, and after hearings. The courtroom infrastructure is being upgraded to meet the requirements of Paperless Courtrooms.
- (c) **Virtual / Hybrid Hearings:** In compliance with the directions of the Hon'ble Supreme Court, ITAT has enabled hybrid / virtual hearings at all Benches of the Tribunal. Free and high-speed wireless internet is being provided at all Benches for the use of stakeholders.
- (d) **Cyber Security:** ITAT is fully cognizant of the growing cyber security threats and the need to protect the IT infrastructure from the threats by implementing strong cybersecurity measures and following best practices. Guidelines issued by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology and National Informatics Centre, ITAT have been circulated to all stakeholders for strict adherence. ITAT has also taken up the security audit of the website and web application to ensure that Digital Nagriks experience a safe and trusted online experience with the Income Tax Appellate Tribunal.

Other Important Events and Activities in Year 2023-24

- (a) **INTERACTIVE MEETING WITH THE STAKEHOLDERS OF ITAT:** An interactive meeting with the stakeholders of ITAT was conducted in Mumbai on 15.01.2023. Shri Kiren Rijiju, Hon'ble Union Minister of Law & Justice chaired the meeting. Shri G.S. Pannu, President, ITAT, Vice President, ITAT, Pune zone, Members of the Bar Association, and officers of the Income Tax Appellate Tribunal attended the meeting.

- (b) **WOMEN'S DAY CELEBRATION:** The Women's Day Celebration was conducted at various Benches on 08th March, 2023 and 08th March, 2024.
- (c) **RASHTRIYA EKTA DIWAS (NATIONAL UNITY DAY):** All Benches of Income Tax Appellate Tribunal observed 31st October, 2023 as "Rashtriya Ekta Diwas" (National Unity Day) and all Officers/Officials took the pledge on the occasion.
- (d) **YOGA DAY CELEBRATION:** International Day of Yoga was celebrated on 21st June, 2023 in all Benches of ITAT.
- (e) **HINDI DIWAS & HINDI PAKHWADA:** Inauguration of the Hindi Pakhwada at Pune under the Chairmanship of Shri. Amit Shah, Hon'ble Home Minister of India. All the Benches of the ITAT organized Hindi Diwas on 14.09.2023 and Hindi Pakhwada successfully in September, 2023.
- (f) **ITAT FOUNDATION DAY CELEBRATION:** ITAT's Foundation Day was celebrated on 25.01.2024 at various Benches of ITAT in the year 2023-24.

The Premises of Benches of ITAT

At the following stations the ITAT is functioning from its own building:

Jaipur
Bangalore
Cuttack
Lucknow

At the following stations, parcels of land have been purchased by the ITAT for the construction of office-cum-residential buildings: -

Ahmedabad
Kolkata
Guwahati
Pune

Details of the status of Land & Buildings

- (i) **Delhi:** The construction of the office building of the ITAT, Delhi Benches, Delhi by the NBCC India Ltd. in Tower-B at World Trade Center, Nauroji Nagar, New Delhi is in full swing. Payment of Rs.16,44,96,891/- made to NBCC Services Limited as initial deposit for the execution of Interior fit-out works for office space. An amount of Rs.16,55,85,869/- and Rs.12,42,56,429/- have been paid to the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs for already allotted new office premises in respect of ITAT, Delhi Benches at Tower-B World Trade Centre, New Delhi in F.Y. 2023-24 as an 11th Installment & 12th Installment. An amount of Rs.19,56,68,821/- has been paid to NBCC Services Ltd. for the execution of Interior fit-out works in F.Y. 2023-24.

- (ii) **Ahmedabad:** A land admeasuring 11,559 sq Mtrs has been allotted for the construction of an office building/Staff Quarters for ITAT, Ahmedabad Benches, Ahmedabad land at FP No. 60, TP No. 694 of Joje Sola, Tal. Ghatlodiya for Rs. 76,46,16,869/- allotted by the state Government of Gujarat and transferred/entered in Govt. land records in the name of ITAT, Ahmedabad, vide U.O. dtd. 12.10.2021. The Preliminary Estimate received from CPWD, Ahmedabad for Rs.77.82 crores has been concurred by Ministry vide its letter dated 09.07.2022. Authorization issued for Rs.11,00,00,000/- (Rs.10,00,00,000 for Civil Work and Rs.1,00,00,000 for Electrical Work) against the concurrence of Rs.24,00,00,000/- towards construction of office building of ITAT, Ahmedabad for F.Y.2023-24. Out of that, an amount of Rs.5,06,05,446/- (Rs.4,09,27,716/- for Civil work and Rs.96,77,730/- for electrical work) has been surrendered in the last F.Y. 2023-24.
- (iii) **Kolkata** The WBHIDCO Ltd. has allotted 1.25 Acres of leasehold land vide letter dated 19.09.2019 at the financial & legal Hub developed by West Bengal Housing Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd. (WBHIDCO). The entire consideration amount of Rs.16 Crores has been paid to the West Bengal Housing Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd. (WBHIDCO) in the FY 2019-20. A Preliminary Estimate received from CPWD, Kolkata for Rs. 66.39 crores has been concurred by the Ministry vide its letter dated 09.07.2022. Authorization issued for Rs.10,00,00,000/- with instructions to make the immediate payment required by CPWD, Kolkata against the concurrence of Rs.35,00,00,000/- towards the construction of office building of ITAT, Kolkata for F.Y.2023-24. Out of that, an amount of Rs.3,00,00,000 has been surrendered in the last F.Y. 2023-24.
- (iv) **Guwahati** The I.T.A.T., purchased 1 Bigha, 3 Katha, and 1 Lessa at Fancy Bazar, Uzanbazar, Guwahati from Central Inland Water Transport Corporation (CIWTC), A Govt. of India Undertaking Organization, under Ministry of Shipping for a consideration amount of Rs.4,03,00,000/-. Even more than 5 years after the execution of the sale deed the land has not been transferred in the name of ITAT.

The Director (NER) of Inland Waterways Authority of India, Ministry of Shipping, Govt. of India, Noida, Uttar Pradesh informed by letter dated. 28.01.2020 that the Inland Waterways Authority of India has advised the Regional Office, Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) at Guwahati to take appropriate action regarding handing over of possession of Land at Fancy Bazar of Guwahati to ITAT and also conveyed to DC, Kamrup that the objection raised earlier on issue of NOC be treated as withdrawn and the regional office has no objection on issue of NOC to transfer the parcel of land to ITAT, Ministry of Law & Justice.

In October 2021 Ministry of Shipping requested ITAT through MoLJ to consider returning the land, which has been objected to. The then Hon'ble Law Minister vide D.O. letter dated 04.02.2022 addressed to the Hon'ble Minister for Ports, has requested for handing over the land to ITAT Bench at Guwahati.

- (v) **Pune** The ITAT had acquired 4000 Sq. Mtrs. Land at Akrudi from Pimpri Chinchwad New Township Development Authority at a cost for Rs. 1.20 Crores in 1998 for construction of

Office-cum-Residential complex. Land being outside the city limits and logistically inconvenient, objections were raised by the Bar Associations and other stakeholders. ITAT has proposed the Ministry of Law & Justice vide D.O. letter dated 01.02.2022 of the then President, ITAT to consider utilization of land for setting up a useful Resource Centre for instance, a residential legal Academy/training Centre for India Legal Service Officers, etc. to enable optimum utilization of the land, including the use of such facility by ITAT also for training its Officers and Staff.

Facilities for Members: The Hon'ble Supreme Court vide order dated 19.9.2003 in SLP (L) Nos.6905/1998 & TP(C) Nos. 659 and 672-673 of 1998 in the case of Union of India and others Vs. All Gujarat Federation of Tax Consultants had directed the Government to provide certain facilities to the Members of Income Tax Appellate Tribunal and every effort has been made by the ITAT to provide such facilities to the Members.

Benevolent Fund: A Benevolent Fund, the corpus of which has been built out of voluntary contributions by the officers and staff, also exists in the Income-tax Appellate Tribunal. The President, Income-tax Appellate Tribunal, is the patron. Officers and staff contribute voluntarily to this fund and disbursements are made to officials in need of medical or other emergent situations on the recommendation of a committee formed under the Rules.

Right to Information Act, 2005: RTI Act 2005 has already been implemented by the Income Tax Appellate Tribunal. All the 28 stations (63 Benches) of ITAT are registered on the website of CIC, Delhi. To facilitate quicker access to information for RTI applicants in keeping with the letter and spirit of the RTI Act, all 28 Public Authorities of ITAT have been brought under the RTI Online Portal (rtionline.gov.in).

Implementation of Official Language Policy: In accordance with the provisions of the Official Language Act, 1963, every endeavour is being made to ensure the progressive use of Hindi in the Benches of the ITAT.

With a view of keeping constant monitoring on the implementation of the official language policy prescribed by the Department of official language, Government of India and to provide guidance, as and when required, Official Language Implementation Committees (OLICs) have been constituted at all the Benches of Income-tax Appellate Tribunal

Progress in achieving the targets set for Hindi correspondence and implementation of Official Language Policies is monitored by the Official Language Implementation Committee (OLIC) of the concerned Bench and periodical reports, forwarded by the Benches regarding progressive use of Hindi, are regularly scrutinized by Head Office at Mumbai. Training in Hindi/Hindi Typing/Hindi Stenography is offered by nominating a sufficient number of officials under the Hindi Teaching Scheme, of the Department of Official Language, Government of India.

Hindi workshops are also held in all the Benches for proper implementation of the Official Language policy to encourage the use of Hindi and to remove the hesitation of officers/employees to work in Hindi. This year sufficient funds are provided to purchase Hindi Books at all the Benches. All Benches of Income Tax Appellate Tribunal were instructed to make expenditures towards the purchase of Hindi Books (i.e. 50% of the total library grant) as per the Official Language policy and in accordance with the targets fixed by the Department of Official Language, Government of India.

To create awareness about the use of Hindi in official work as well as to accelerate the pace of its progressive use, Hindi Diwas and Hindi Pakhwada have been organized at all benches.

An Annual Magazine “**Srijan**” is published at the Income Tax Appellate Tribunal, Mumbai. It contains articles, stories, poems and travelogues etc. written by Members, Officers and employees of various Benches of ITAT, besides photos of the Hindi Pakhwada Programmes, and Hindi Workshops.

Implementation of instructions regarding representatives in services of Handicapped, Scheduled Castes & Scheduled Tribes and Ex-Servicemen etc.: The Government of India’s instructions regarding the concessions in appointments to the Handicapped, Scheduled Castes & Scheduled Tribes and Ex-Servicemen etc., were duly implemented during the period under consideration. The statistics relating to the representation of these categories in services of the Income-tax Appellate Tribunal are enclosed at **ANNEXURE IV.**

Number of female employees working in the ITAT and facilities provided to them in addition to those given to male employees is as under:

Group A	11
Group B	42
Group C	63
Multi-Tasking Staff	12
TOTAL	128

PHOTOGRAPHS OF IMPORTANT EVENTS HELD IN THE ITAT IN THE YEAR 2023-24

JUSTICE (RETD.) C.V. BHADANG TAKING OVER CHARGE AS HON’BLE PRESIDENT, ITAT ON 23.10.2023





BOOK RELEASE OF DEPARTMENTAL MAGAZINE “SRIJAN-2023” AT ITAT MUMBAI, COURT-NO.-1



ORGANIZING OF HINDI PAKHWADA 2023 AT ITAT, MUMBAI BENCHES, MUMBAI



INTERNATIONAL YOGA DAY HELD ON 21.06.2023 AT ITAT, MUMBAI





INTERNATIONAL YOGA DAY HELD ON 21.06.2023 AT ITAT, VISAKHAPATNAM



INTERNATIONAL YOGA DAY HELD ON 21.06.2023 AT ITAT, CHENNAI



INTERNATIONAL YOGA DAY HELD ON 21.06.2023 AT ITAT, AHMEDABAD



INTERNATIONAL YOGA DAY HELD ON 21.06.2023 AT ITAT, BANGALORE



PLEDGE TAKEN ON THE OCCASION OF NATIONAL UNITY DAY ON 31.10.2023 AT ITAT CHENNAI



PLEDGE TAKEN ON THE OCCASION OF NATIONAL UNITY DAY ON 31.10.2023 AT ITAT LUCKNOW



PLEDGE TAKEN ON THE OCCASION OF NATIONAL UNITY DAY ON 31.10.2023 AT ITAT AHMEDABAD



83RD FOUNDATION DAY OF ITAT HELD AT ITAT MUMBAI BENCHES, MUMBAI





INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY HELD ON 08TH MARCH, 2024 AT ITAT, MUMBAI



INDIA INTERNATIONAL ARBITRATION CENTRE (“IIAC”): -

ABOUT IIAC:

The India International Arbitration Centre (IIAC) was established by the India International Arbitration Centre Act, 2019. The purpose of this enactment is to create an independent and autonomous regime for institutional arbitration. IIAC has been declared as an institution of national importance.

The dispute resolution processes that are in place have a huge impact on the Indian economy and the global perception of doing business in India. To this end, the IIAC aims to inspire confidence amongst parties (both domestic and international) by providing a neutral dispute resolution platform for the resolution of commercial disputes through a seamless arbitral process.

OBJECTS OF IIAC:

- (a) to bring targeted reforms to develop itself as a flagship institution for conducting international and domestic arbitration;
- (b) to promote research and study, providing teaching and training, and organizing conferences and seminars in arbitration, conciliation, mediation, and other alternative dispute resolution matters;
- (c) to provide facilities and administrative assistance for conciliation, mediation, and arbitral proceedings;
- (d) to maintain panels of accredited arbitrators, conciliators, and mediators both at national and international levels or specialists such as surveyors and investigators;
- (e) to collaborate with other national and international institutions and organizations to ensure the credibility of the Centre as a specialised institution in arbitration and conciliation;
- (f) to set up facilities in India and abroad to promote the activities of the Centre;
- (g) to lay down parameters for different modes of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms being adopted by the Centre; and
- (h) such other objectives as it may deem fit with the approval of the Central Government.

FUNCTIONS OF IIAC:

- (a) to facilitate the conduct of arbitration and other forms of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, both international and domestic, in the manner as may be specified by the regulations;
- (b) to provide cost effective and timely services for the conduct of arbitration and conciliation at national and international levels;
- (c) to promote studies in the field of alternative dispute resolution and related matters, and to promote reforms in the system of settlement of disputes;

- (d) to undertake teaching and to provide for diffusion of knowledge of law and procedures on alternative dispute resolution and related matters and to award certificates and other academic or professional distinctions;
- (e) to impart training in alternative dispute resolution and related matters to those who are handling arbitration, conciliation, and mediation;
- (f) to co-operate with other societies, institutions and organizations, national or international for promoting alternative dispute resolution; and
- (g) to perform such other functions as may be entrusted to it by the Central Government for promoting alternative dispute resolution.

CONFERENCES ORGANIZED/REPRESENTED BY IIAC

1. Delhi Discourse 2023 organized by Federation of Indian Corporate Lawyers: Chairperson, IIAC was invited to a conference titled “Delhi Discourse 2023” with the theme “Navigating India’s Legal Terrain in the Era of Amrit Kaal”, organized by Federation of Indian Corporate Lawyers, on 26.05.2023 at Hotel Taj Palace, New Delhi, to deliver the special address in the session Dispute Resolution - “Resolving Disputes in India: Trends and Strategies for Success”.
2. IIAC organized “Indian Arbitration Leadership Roundtable” with practitioners from leading law firms on 27.05.2023, at Taj Palace, New Delhi: IIAC organized a Roundtable viz., “Indian Arbitration Leadership Roundtable” to discuss the India International Arbitration Centre (Criteria for Admission to the panel of arbitrators) Regulations, 2023, Draft India International Arbitration Centre (Conduct of Arbitration Proceedings) Regulations, 2023; way forward as to what is required to be done by the IIAC to promote Institutional Arbitration for Domestic and International Commercial Disputes; and establishment of Users’ Council.
3. Conference on Arbitrating INDO-UK Commercial Disputes - 2ND EDITION organized by the Indian Council of Arbitration with the support of FICCI: Chairperson, IIAC was invited as a speaker and moderator at a Technical Session, viz., “Navigating the Enforcement Process for International Arbitral Awards in the UK & India” at the conference organized by the Indian Council of Arbitration with the support of FICCI on Arbitrating INDO-UK Commercial Disputes - 2ND EDITION on 05.06.2023.
4. India Dispute Resolution Forum at St. James Court, Taj Hotel, London: Chairperson, IIAC was invited as Speaker and Moderator at India Dispute Resolution Forum 2023, organized by ThoughtLeaders4Disputes on 08.06.2023 at St. James Court, Taj Hotel, London, to share his views on the topic “Debate: Can India become a hub of International Arbitration?”
5. IIAC organized Indian Arbitration Leadership Roundtable on the topic “*Institutional Arbitration – expectations and way forward*” for Legal Heads of leading Corporate Houses on 04.08.2023 at Hotel-Sofitel, BKC Mumbai: Deliberations included expectations from an arbitral institution and steps taken/to be taken by IIAC in this regard.
6. Collaboration with the Chambers of Shashank Garg: Pursuant to approval of the Members of the IIAC, the IIAC has collaborated with the Chambers of Shashank Garg, as an institutional partner

for a series of fireside chats with leading international arbitrators.

7. IIAC organized a Conference on “Institutional Arbitration and Way Forward”: IIAC organized a Conference for legal heads of Central Public Sector Undertakings (CPSEs) on 25th September 2023 at Jacaranda Hall, India Habitat Centre, New Delhi-110003.
8. IIAC hosted a Webinar on “Ad-hoc to Institutional Arbitration: The necessity for a paradigm shift in approach”, on 11th October 2023 (during the India ADR Week 2023 organised by the Mumbai Centre for International Arbitration). On behalf of IIAC, the webinar was moderated by Mr. Ganesh Chandru, Part Time Member, IIAC.
9. Global Maritime India Summit (GMIS) 2023: Chairperson, IIAC was invited as a speaker at Global Maritime India Summit (GMIS) 2023, organized by the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways in association with Indian Ports Association & FICCI at MMRDA Ground Bandra Kurla Complex on 19th October 2023, to share his views on the topic “Maritime Financing, Insurance & Arbitration”.
10. Chairperson, IIAC was invited as a panel speaker at the inaugural Webinar “Africa-India Dispute Resolution Dialogues” of the Webinar Series organized by WEBNYAY & ODR AFRICA on 30th October 2023, to share his views on the topic “ODR in Africa and India-Where are we?”
11. Chairperson, IIAC was invited to inaugurate the launch of ADRAAS- a Real-time environment for dispute resolution, during the “Arbitration in the new age” Conclave on 25th November 2023. Chairperson, IIAC was also invited as a panel speaker at the above said Conclave organized by Adraas (Realtime Environment for Dispute Resolution) to share his views on the topic ‘Arbitration Reforms- What to Expect?’
12. Chairperson, IIAC was invited as a speaker at a Conference on Alternate Dispute Resolution with a special focus on International Arbitration organized by Indian Railways Institute of Logistics and Materials Management (IRILMM) on 30th November 2023, to share his views on the topic ‘India as an international arbitration hub: is it an idea whose time has come?’
13. Chairperson, IIAC was invited to give a special address at the inaugural ceremony of the 4th Edition of Biennial Conference 2023 “SCL International Conference on Construction Law and Arbitration: Reshaping Construction Dispute Resolution” organized by Society of Construction Law on 8th December 2023 at New Delhi.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDINGS (MoU's)

Memorandum of Understanding between IIAC and Indian Institute of Management Rohtak (IIM Rohtak): The IIAC and Indian Institute of Management Rohtak (IIM Rohtak) have entered a MOU on 30.04.2023. The purpose of the MOU is to undertake activities to develop an awareness campaign and promotion campaign that will align the goals of the IIAC in making India an international hub for arbitration.

Memorandum of Understanding between IIAC and Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS): RICS founded in London in 1868, a global professional body for those working in the Built Environment, Construction, Land, Property, and Real Estate have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on 17th October 2023 at New Delhi. Through the MOU, the parties aim to work together and leverage IIAC's position as an institution of national importance, which is tasked to provide seamless arbitration and

ADR services in India, and RICS's 150 years of history and international reputation in administering dispute resolution, especially arbitration, in the built environment sector.

Memorandum of Understanding between IIAC and Rashtriya Raksha University ("RRU"): RRU, an Institution of National Importance under the Ministry of Home Affairs have entered into an MOU on 05th December 2023 at Gujarat during 2nd RRU Investment Arbitration Academy. Among others, MoU aims to synergize the expertise of the RRU and IIAC by accrediting academic programme, undertaking upskilling and training programmes, encouraging research and study in the fields of arbitration and other forms of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, both domestic and international and online education through the various entities created under the aegis of RRU.

EMPANELMENT OF ARBITRATORS WITH IIAC

IIAC has initiated the process of empanelment of Arbitrators pursuant to Criteria for Admission to the panel of Arbitrators Regulations. To that effect, the IIAC has received many applications on its online portal from various experts seeking empanelment as an Arbitrator with IIAC under categories viz former Judges, Advocates, Architects, Chartered Accountants, Company Secretaries, Cost & Work Accountants, Engineers, and Public Service, etc. The IIAC has developed a software application having a dashboard for the Chamber of Arbitration to scrutinize the applications for admission to the panel of arbitrators and thereafter to empanel the arbitrators. Based on instructions from the Chairperson of IIAC, the Registrar forwards the profiles of the applicants to the Chamber of Arbitration (International and Domestic) for scrutiny and consideration as per the IIAC (Criteria for Admission to the Panel of Arbitrators) Regulations, 2023, from time to time.

NOTIFICATION OF REGULATIONS:

The India International Arbitration Centre (Conduct of Arbitration) Regulations, 2023 have been published in the Gazette of India on 01.09.2023.

The India International Arbitration Centre (Manner of Appointment and Powers and Functions of the Chief Executive Officer) Regulations, 2023 have been published in the Gazette of India on 05.10.2023.

NOTIFICATION OF RULES

India International Arbitration Centre (Composition and Functions of the Committees) Rules, 2023 have been published in the Gazette of India on 04.10.2023.

RECRUITMENT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER (CEO) ON DIRECT RECRUITMENT BASIS

IIAC initiated the process of recruitment of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) on a direct recruitment basis, as per the India International Arbitration Centre (Manner of Appointment and Powers and Functions of the Chief Executive Officer) Regulations, 2023.

ESTABLISHMENT OF IIAC'S USERS' COUNCIL

The IIAC has established the Users' Council to promote and develop India as a significant arbitration hub by facilitating a quick and efficient dispute resolution mechanism. Through the Users' Council, the IIAC aims to create and maintain a cohesive alliance between diverse users of Arbitration in India and Internationally coming from various jurisdictions and industries.

IIAC MODEL ARBITRATION CLAUSE

IIAC has approved IIAC Model Arbitration Clause and the same has been uploaded at its website www.indiaiac.org.

The Indian Law Institute, New Delhi

ABOUT THE INSTITUTE

The Indian Law Institute (ILI) is a premier legal research Institute founded on 27th December 1956. The first President of India Dr. Rajendra Prasad formally inaugurated the opening of Institute on December 12, 1957 in the Central Hall of Parliament, New Delhi which was witnessed by the first Prime Minister of India Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru and Hon'ble Mr. Justice S.R. Dave, the then Chief Justice of India.

Hon'ble Chief Justice of India is the *ex-officio* President and the Hon'ble Law Minister of Government of India is the *ex-officio* Vice-President of the Institute. The Institute's regular administration is controlled by various committees headed by Senior Judges of the Supreme Court of India and other members are chosen from the legal fraternity including Judges from various High Courts and prominent academicians.

The prime objective of the Institute is to promote advanced studies and research in law and to contribute substantially in reforming the administration of Justice, so as to meet the socio-economic aspirations of the people through law and its instrumentalities.

The Institute got the status of Deemed University in the year 2004. The Institute got its first ever accreditation with 'A' grade by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) in March 2017 with a CGPA of 3.35 on a 4.00-point scale through a vigorous assessment process by the peer team.

The Institute is conducting Master in Law and Doctoral courses as well as a few PG Diploma Courses in various areas of law, *i.e.*, Alternative Dispute Resolution, Corporate Laws and Management, Cyber Law, and Intellectual Property Rights Laws.

The Library of the Institute is one of the leading law libraries in Asia and attracts scholars from all over the world for legal research and contains around 82,000 volumes and about 190 current legal periodicals including serial publications. Digitisation of rare documents and the Institute's publications are done on a regular basis and placed in the repository for access by the public at large. The library of the Institute has recently shared its Institutional repository at the coveted National Digital Library platform (NDL) which is the brainchild of the MHRD-NME-ICT.

ACTIVITIES OF THE INSTITUTE

ACADEMIC PROGRAMMES

After the declaration of Deemed University in the year 2004, the institute launched research-oriented LL.M. programme. Admission to the LL.M programme is strictly on merit in Common Admission Test (CAT) conducted every year and Interview. Presently the following programmes are conducted by the Institute:

Programme(s)	Students Enrolled in academic session 2023-24
LL.M.- 1 Year (Full Time)	46
P G Diploma Courses (Alternative Dispute Resolution, Corporate Laws and Management, Cyber Law and Intellectual Property Rights Laws)	266
No. of seats in Ph.D. in Law	05
Total No. of Students	317

- The Institute has a Ph.D. programme. There are 26 scholars enrolled as of date.
- E-Learning courses of three months duration on “**Cyber Law**” (44th batch) and “**Intellectual Property Rights and IT in the Internet Age**” (55th batch) were started on May 8, 2023.

Common Admission Test-2023 for LL.M. 1-year programme

Common Admission Test (CAT) – 2023 for admissions in LL.M. 1 Year Programme was held on 7th May, 2023 at Maharaja Agrasen College, Delhi and the result was declared on 25.5.2023.

The viva-voce for admission to LL.M. 1-year programme (2023-24) was held on 29.5.2023 and 30.5.2023. The result as per merit was declared on 5.06.2023.

Ph.D. Entrance-2023

The Admission Test – 2023 for admissions in Ph.D. Programme was held on 07.05.2023 at Maharaja Agrasen College, Delhi and the result was declared on 22.6.2022.

PG DIPLOMA PROGRAMME

The admission process for PG Diploma Programmes started on 15th March, 2023. The Institute received 586 applications for 458 seats.

LL.M. 1 YEAR (1ST SEMESTER) EXAMINATIONS

The examination for LL.M. Semester End Examinations (1st Semester) was held during 15th – 23th May, 2023.

TRAINING PROGRAMMES/ SEMINAR/ CONFERENCE/ BOOK RELEASE

I TRAINING PROGRAMMES

A. INDIAN LAW INSTITUTE (ILI) – NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION (NHRC)

TRAINING PROGRAMMES

One-Day Programme for Media Personnel and Government Public Relations Officers on Media and Human Rights: Issues and Challenges on January 21, 2023

The Indian Law Institute in collaboration with the National Human Rights Commission, organized a one-day training program for media personnel and government public relations officers. In the program, several challenges and issues that arise during reporting were discussed. Several eminent speakers like Dr. P. Puneeth, Ms. Anju Mangla, Mr. Sudhanshu Ranjan, and Mr. Vikram Srivastava graced the occasion as guest speakers. The speakers examined the nuances of reporting for different settings like courtrooms, prison conditions, children's rights, etc. They flagged the importance of sensitivity and empathy for media personnel especially when reporting on the marginalized and victimized section of the society. The discussions also dealt with the manner in which law and legal regulation can help the media business create a more ethical and principled structure of governance. However, several participants pointed out that self-regulation can be the only way forward if the media has to continue serving as the fourth pillar of democracy. The training program offered new insights to the attendees and was concluded through a distribution of certificates.



Snippets from the training programme

Two-Days- Programme for Prison Officials on Human Rights: Issues and Challenges on February 11-12, 2023

The Indian Law Institute and the National Human Rights Commission jointly organized a two-day training programme for Prison Officials on Human Rights: Issues and Challenges. The event was graced with the presence of prison officials from across the country. The Inaugural address was given by Smt. Jyotika Kalra, Member NHRC. She focused on the Role of NHRC in the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights. She started the session by quoting Nelson Mandela, who is hailed as the champion of Human rights. She spoke about the enforcement of Human Rights in India and the role played by the NHRC in ensuring the same. Ms. Kalra stressed the importance of prison officials and how relevant their role is in the criminal justice administration system. She also talked about her personal experiences when she visited the prisons to assess the capacity of prisons when she was a member of the Human Rights Commission. She also spoke on the importance of maintaining proper health records of the prison inmates for the smooth functioning of the prisons and as a measure to control any vulnerable and serious diseases among jail inmates. Mr. Shashank

Shekhar, a practicing Supreme Court Advocate, Former member of the Delhi Commission for Protection of Child Rights (DCPCR), and known Child Rights Activist came for the lecture. His topic of discussion was “Protection of Human Rights of Juveniles in Remand Home, Correctional Home with specific reference to the new Juvenile Justice Act”. He deliberated on the definition of child in conflict with the law and Juvenile offenders and discussed various categorization of child offenders under the law.



Snippets from the Programme

Two-Day Programme for First Class Judicial Magistrates on Human Rights: Issues and Challenges on March 25-26, 2023

The Indian Law Institute and the National Human Rights Commission jointly organized a two-day training programme for first-class judicial magistrates on human rights issues and challenges. The event began with the inaugural function on March 25, 2023, with the lighting of the lamp by the Chief Guest, Hon'ble Mr. Justice Dipak Misra, former Chief Justice of India, the Guest of Honor Shri Devendra Kumar Singh, IAS Secretary General and CEO of the National Human Rights Commission. Hon'ble Justice Misra said that justice is the mother of all virtue and is the greatest courageous act of the man doing justice. He referred to his own coined definition of justice as “No person is an unperson”. He also emphasized the close connection between magistrates, the constitution, and human rights. He further stated that liberty is a blessing that must be earned before enjoying it. He advised that the conditions while granting bail should not be erroneous and sentencing should neither be too liberal nor disproportionate.



Hon'ble Mr. Justice Dipak Misra lighting the lamp at the inaugural session of the training programme.



Participants of the training programme

One-day training program for Officials working in Juvenile Homes, Old Age Homes & Health Sector on Human Rights: Issues and Challenges on May 27, 2023

A day training programme jointly organized by the Indian Law Institute and National Human Rights Commission for *officials working in Juvenile Homes, Old Age homes and the Health Sector* on “Human Rights: Issues and Challenges” was held on May 27, 2023. The programme was inaugurated by the Chief guest, **Hon’ble Mr. Justice Rajendra Menon, Chairperson, Armed Forces Tribunal**, Principal Bench, New Delhi, and former, Chief Justice of Delhi High Court and Patna High Court with the lightening of Lamp along with other dignitaries.



Snippets from the Programme

Two days training program for First Class Judicial Magistrate on Human Rights: Issues and Challenges on July 1-2, 2023

The Indian Law Institute in collaboration with the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) organized a two-days Training Programme for the First-Class Judicial Magistrate on “Human Rights: Issues and Challenges”. The programme was inaugurated with the lightening of Lamp.

This was followed by a welcome address by Prof. (Dr.) Manoj Kumar Sinha, Director, Indian Law Institute, New Delhi. Prof. Sinha warmly welcomed the Chief guest, guest of honour, and all the participants for the two days training programme. Prof. Sinha, briefly deliberated on human rights and its definition and highlighted various issues and challenges in contemporary times.

This was followed by the address by the guest of honour, Prof (Dr.) Ranbir Singh, former Vice Chancellor, NLU Delhi. Prof. Singh discussed some important aspects of the human rights and remedial measures provided by the courts. He discussed the role of the judicial system in the betterment and promotion of the human rights.

Two days training program for Police Personnel on Police and Human Rights: Issues and Challenges on July 29-30, 2023

The Indian Law Institute in Collaboration with the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) organized a two days Training Programme for police Personnel on “Police and Human Rights: Issues and Challenges” on July 29-30, 2023 at the ILI. The programme was inaugurated with the lightening of Lamp. This was followed by the Address by the guest of honour, Sh. Devendra Kumar Nim, Joint Secretary, Establishment and General Administration, IP & TAFS, NHRC. He motivated the young trainee officers as the first line of

defense of the Human Rights of the Common Man. He told police officers to show sensitivity and due concern when anyone approaches with a complaint. It is the police officer who sets the wheel of the criminal justice system in motion. He said that it is the police where a person in distress or vulnerable will go first and seek protection for his human rights. In many cases, the Supreme Court and High Court are approached later.



Views of the training programme

Two days training program for Prison Officials on Police and Human Rights: Issues and Challenges on October 07-08, 2023

The Indian Law Institute in Collaboration with the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) organized a two-days Training Programme for Prison Officials on “Police and Human Rights: Issues and Challenges” on October 7-8, 2023 at the ILI. The programme was inaugurated with the lightening of Lamp. This was followed by the Address by the Guest of honor, Prof. (Dr.) Ranbir Singh, former Vice Chancellor, National Law University, Delhi. Ms. Jyotika Kalra, Former Member, NHRC was the Chief Guest of the Inaugural Session. She raised various concerns prevailing in the prisons in India that need to be worked upon. The issues regarding overcrowding, mental health, and correctional measures for drug addicts’ problems of female prisoners must be worked upon, especially in a society where prison laws are archaic and prisons are not the priority of the state.



Two Days programme for Judicial Officials on Human Rights: Issues and Challenges on November 04-05, 2023

The Indian Law Institute in Collaboration with the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) organized two days Training Programme for Judicial Officials on Human Rights: Issues and Challenges on November 4-5, 2023. The programme was inaugurated with the lightening of lamp by the Chief Guest, Ms. Jyotika Kalra, Former Member, NHRC. She discussed the role of NHRC in promoting human rights across the country.



One Day programme for Media Personnel and Government Public Relations Officers on Media and Human Rights: Issues and Challenges on December 10, 2023

The Indian Law Institute in Collaboration with the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) organized a one-day Training Programme for Media Personnel and Government Public Relation Officers on “Police and Human Rights: Issues and Challenges” on December 10, 2023, at the ILI. The programme was inaugurated with the lightening of Lamp and inaugural address by Prof. (Dr.) Manoj Kumar Sinha, Director, ILI, this was followed by Special Address by Mr. P.K. Malhotra, former Law Secretary in his speech he focused on the relevance of Media being the fourth pillar of



democracy and the contemporary challenges. The keynote address was given by Mr. Sanjay Parikh, Senior Advocate. This was followed by the Inaugural Address by the Guest of Honor, Hon'ble Mr. Justice Sudhir Agarwal, Judicial Member, NGT.

B. INDIAN LAW INSTITUTE (ILI) – NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF DEFENSE ESTATE MANAGEMENT (NIDEM) - TRAINING PROGRAMMES

Five Days Training Programme on Law for ‘Group A, Officers’ of “National Institute of Defence Estate Management (NIDEM)” on June 05-09, 2023

A Five Days Training Programme on Law for ‘Group A, Officers’ of “Indian Defense Estate Services” was organized from June 05-09, 2023 at ILI. This programme was jointly organized by the Indian Law Institute, New Delhi, and the National Institute of Defense Estate Management (NIDEM). This programme aimed to enhance the officer's understanding of the practical as well as theoretical aspects on law which would help them in their services. The course was tailor-made to cater to the needs of officers serving in the Indian Defense Estate Services.

The programme was inaugurated by the **Chief Guest, Prof. (Dr.) Ranbir Singh**, Founding Vice Chancellor of National Law University, Delhi, and NALSAR, Hyderabad, presently Pro-Vice Chancellor, IILM University with the lightning of lamp along with other dignitaries, and the Valedictory address was given by the Chief Guest, **Hon'ble Justice Navin Sinha, Former Judge, Supreme Court of India** and Former Chief Justice, Chhattisgarh High Court and Rajasthan High Court. He shared his valuable learning experience as a judge and Advocate in various Constitutional Courts with the participant officers. He discussed how the government is coming as the biggest litigant in the country and what can be best done by the officers to meet the ends of justice. He motivated the participant officers to work with utmost honesty and sincerity.



Snippets from the Programme

Five Days Training Programme on Law for ‘Group A, Officers’ of “National Institute of Defence Estate Management (NIDEM)” on 28 August – 1 September 2023

A Five-Day Training Programme on Law for Officers and Officials of Defence Estates and Cantt. Board was organized from 28 August -1 September 2023. This programme was jointly organized by the Indian Law Institute, New Delhi, and the National Institute of Defense Estate Management (NIDEM).

This programme aimed to enhance the officer’s understanding of the practical as well as theoretical aspects on law which would help them in their services officers serving in the Indian Defense Estate Services. The programme was inaugurated by the Hon’ble Mr. Justice Swatanter Kumar, Former Judge, the Supreme Court of India & Former Chairperson, the National Green Tribunal New Delhi with the lightning of lamp along with other dignitaries. The Chief Guest and Guest of Honour were welcomed by Prof. Dr. Manoj Kumar Sinha, Director, Indian Law Institute with bouquets of flowers which was followed by the Welcome address delivered by Prof. Sinha, Director, ILI



Five Days Training Programme on Law for IDES Officers and SDOs from December 11, 2023 to December 15, 2023

Five day training programme on Law for IDES Officers and SDOs organised from December 11-15, 2023 was organized. This programme was jointly organized by the Indian Law Institute, New Delhi, and National Institute of Defence Estate Management (NIDEM). This programme aimed to enhance the officer’s understanding on the practical as well as theoretical aspects of the law which would help them in their services to officers serving in the Indian Defense Estate Services. Hon’ble Ms. Justice Indira Banerjee, former Judge, Supreme Court of India addressed the participants as Chief Guest. Dr. Reeta Vasishta, Secretary, the Department of Legal Affairs was the guest of honour.



CONFERENCE/ SEMINAR/ BOOK RELEASE

International Webinar on Disaster Management Laws in Asia: A Retrospect on January 27-28, 2023



International Webinar on **Disaster Management Laws in Asia: A Retrospect** was organized by the Commonwealth Institute of Justice Education & Research (CIJER) and the Indian Law Institute, New Delhi. This event was held on 27th & 28th of January 2023. Hon'ble Mr. Justice Swatanter Kumar, Former Judge, Supreme Court of India/ Former Chairperson, the National Green Tribunal graced the occasion as a Chief Guest. In his welcome address Prof. (Dr.) Manoj Kumar Sinha commended the effort and initiative of Prof. (Dr.) S. Sivakumar for conceptualizing and the organization of this event. Prof. Sinha highlighted the importance of disaster management and emphasized that the theme of disaster management should become an essential part of the mainstream discourse. He believed that the international webinar should be able to bring forth many new perspectives and help in augmenting knowledge sharing. He hoped that this webinar would provide an important platform for understanding different legal regimes across Asia. Prof. (Dr.) S. Sivakumar explained about the project i.e., **Joint Research on Disaster Management Laws in Asia**.

CLEA Golden Jubilee International Conference, 2023 on Augmenting Legal Education through Technology: Issues and Challenges from March 2-4, 2023

The Indian Law Institute in Collaboration with the Commonwealth Legal Education Association, London, and the Lloyd Law College Greater Noida (U.P) organized The Commonwealth Legal Education Association Golden Jubilee International Conference, 2023 On Augmenting Legal Education through Technology: Issues and Challenges, 2023 held from 2nd March 2023 to 4th March 2023. The Conference started with Pre-Conference Workshops on: i) Street Law, ii) Combating Corruption and Money Laundering, and iii) Comparative Constitution & Public Law. The Inaugural ceremony had the presence of Hon'ble Mr. Justice V. Ramasubramanian as the Chief Guest and Mr. R. Venkataramani, Ld. Attorney General for India along with Mr. AM Amin Uddin, Mr. Attorney General of Bangladesh as the Guest of honour. The valedictory ceremony had the presence of Hon'ble Mr. Justice Surya Kant, Judge Supreme Court of India as the Chief Guest along with the presence of Prof. (Dr.) David McQuoid Mason Professor Emeritus, University of Kwazulu Natal, Durban, South Africa and Prof. John Hatchard Vice President, CLEA/Emeritus Professor, School of Law, University of Buckingham.



The Indian Law Institute in collaboration with Delhi High Court Mediation & Conciliation Centre, SAARC Law India, and SAMADHAN will organize 40 Hours Training Program in Mediation on March 28 to April 1, 2023

Indian Law Institute in collaboration with SAARC India and Samadhan, Delhi High Court Mediation and Conciliation Centre, conducted a 40 Hours' Training Program in Mediation in the month of March-April, 2023 spread over 5 days. The training was imparted by the trainers of Samadhan, Ms. Veena Ralli, Mediator/Trainer, Organizing Secretary, Samadhan, Mr. J.P Sengh, Mediator/Trainer along with their team of young mediators Mr. Sumit Chander, Ms. Swati Setia, and Ms. Mitali Gupta. The training was attended by professionals from varied backgrounds like Lawyers, Teachers, Researchers, and even students. The training was curated to explain the theory through Role Plays. To be accurate, it was a blend of theory and practice.



National Conference on the Working of the Indian Judicial System on April 22-23, 2023

The Indian Law Institute organized a National Conference on the Working of the Indian Judicial System on April 22-23, 2023 at ILI. The Conference was inaugurated by Hon'ble Mr. Justice Surya Kant, Judge, Supreme Court of India. In session 1, an interesting presentation involved a live demo of a machine learning tool to assist judges in their judgement. While the algorithm was promising, the presenters acknowledged much work was needed before it could be used in real-time. Nevertheless, this prompted a healthy discussion on how AI can be used to assist judges in their work, shifting the focus from replacing judges with AI to helping them in their work

Several existing AI solutions were discussed by the chairs who gave examples from their professional experience and highlighted how they have found these solutions to be lacking from a legal perspective. More work is required to make AI tools that are helpful in legal issues. Emphasis was also laid on the role

of international conventions in regulating AI, acknowledging the ongoing efforts of the EU in this regard. These conventions are necessary to address concerns of data privacy and to bring some standardization in implementation.



National Conference on 50 years of the basic structure doctrine: In retrospect and prospect on April 24, 2023

The Indian Law Institute in collaboration with the Centre for Law and Governance, Jawaharlal Nehru University conducted a *National Conference* on 50 years of the basic structure doctrine: In retrospect and prospect. The conference commenced with a welcome address by the Director of the Indian Law Institute, Prof. (Dr.) Manoj Kumar Sinha. He flagged the importance of the relationship between globalization and the basic structure. Through a reading of Article 28 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, he stressed the significance of being a citizen of the world.



Snippets from the National Conference

The Indian Law Institute in collaboration with the University of Portsmouth, United Kingdom, organized a workshop on “Constitutional Governance in India: Assessing Implementation, Measuring Impact” from July 20-21, 2023

The Indian Law Institute, New Delhi, and the University of Portsmouth, United Kingdom, collaboratively orchestrated a groundbreaking workshop titled “Constitutional Governance in India: Assessing Implementation, Measuring Impact”. The visionary minds behind this intellectual congregation were Prof. Shubhankar Dam, University of Portsmouth, and Prof. Anurag Deep, the Indian Law Institute. The workshop was themed around the functioning of constitutional institutions, acknowledging the Constitution’s limited guidance on their operation. It recognized the intricate interplay of law and politics shaping these institutions and emphasized the norm-guiding role of court decisions. Out of many Abstracts received, only five were selected to develop into paper and presentation. The distinguished Director of the Indian Law Institute, Prof. (Dr.) Manoj Kumar Sinha, inaugurated the program, setting the stage for two days of scholarly exploration and collaborative discourse.

The Indian Law Institute in collaboration with the Kamkus College of Law, Ghaziabad will organise a Workshop on “Use of Artificial Intelligence in Legal Teaching and Research” on July 26, 2023

The Indian Law Institute in collaboration with the Kamkus College of Law, Ghaziabad will organise a Workshop on “Use of Artificial Intelligence in Legal Teaching and Research” on July 26, 2023. The Workshop seeks to acquaint Law Teachers and Researchers from diverse institutions with the concept of AI and its application in legal academia. The primary objective is to explore and deliberate on the potential utilization of AI tools in legal teaching and research.

Four Days Interactive Programme for Presiding Officers of Debt Recovery Tribunal from August 10, 2023 to August 13, 2023

The Indian Law Institute organised four day interactive programme on law for Presiding Officers (POs) of Debt Recovery Tribunal from August 10 to 13, 2023. This programme was jointly organized by the Indian Law Institute, New Delhi, and the Department of Financial Services, Ministry of Finance.

Books Release Function



“Islamic Law of Divorce: Remedying the Malady and Misconceptions” by Dr. Furqan Ahmad and “An Appraisal of Environmental Law: Evolution and Development” by Dr. Furqan Ahmad & Priya Singh on September 29, 2023.

‘Financial Literacy Awareness’ Workshop

The Indian Law Institute in collaboration with the Association of Mutual Funds in India is organising a workshop on ‘Financial Literacy Awareness’ on 18th October, 2023 at 4.00 p.m. in ILI for the purpose of protection of interest of investors and the common man so that they can take their financial decisions in a more prudent and meaningful manner and also to make them aware about the intricacies of the market and the risks involved in different financial products.



SPECIAL EVENTS

Gold Medal Distribution Ceremony for ILI Convocation – 2023 - March 15, 2023

The Gold Medals distribution ceremony was organised on March 15, 2023, at ILI wherein gold medals were distributed among the Toppers of various courses (LL.M. & PG Diploma Programmes, Session 2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20 & 2020-21) by Hon’ble Mr. Justice Ravindra Bhat, Chairman, Academic Council, ILI / Judge, Supreme Court of India. The Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) Degrees were also awarded to seven scholars and eight merit certificates to the meritorious students of PG Diploma courses.





International Yoga Day Celebration – June 21, 2023

The 9th International Yoga Day was celebrated on June 21, 2023, at the Indian Law Institute to spread the awareness about health benefits of yoga and meditation worldwide. This year Yoga Day was celebrated on the theme “Yoga for Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam” i.e. Yoga for the Welfare of all in the form of ‘One World One Family’.



Celebration of Independence Day – August 14, 2023

The Indian Law Institute (ILI) celebrated and commemorated the Independence Day in collaboration with Union Ministry of Law and Justice.

On the eve of India’s 76th Independence Day, the Indian Law Institute, in collaboration with the Union Ministry of Law and Justice, orchestrated a grand and patriotic celebration on August 14, 2023, under the banner of “Meri Maati, Mera Desh” at the ILI Campus.

The celebrations witnessed the Institute’s students, faculty, and administrative staff organising a series of captivating and meaningful events to commemorate this auspicious occasion. It commenced with a solemn pledge taken by all attendees, reaffirming their commitment to safeguarding the sovereignty and integrity of the nation and upholding the spirit of unity and patriotism. Following this, the national flag was hoisted with utmost pride, symbolising the spirit of India’s freedom to the tune of the National Anthem.



Constitution Day Celebrations– November 26, 2023

The Indian Law Institute in collaboration with the Ministry of Law & Justice, Government of India has organized a debate competition on “The Limits of Liberty: Rights and Duties in the Indian Constitution” on 25th November, 2023. Fifteen teams of various law Universities participated in the debate. The event was inaugurated by Hon’ble Mr. Justice Amreshwar Pratap Sahi, President, the National Consumer Dispute Redressal Commission (NCDRC). Dr Niten Chandra, Law Secretary, Ministry of Law and Justice also graced the event. The inauguration ceremony commenced with the traditional lighting of the lamp and a ceremonial honor to the distinguished guests. Prof. Dr. Manoj Kumar Sinha, Director, the Indian Law Institute welcomed the gathering. During his welcome address, he stressed the relevance of the topic and how it’s important to have constant discussions on Liberty, Rights, and Duties which serve as the cornerstone of the Indian Constitution. Prof. Dr. Jyoti Dogra proposed the vote of thanks. The debate also had five technical sessions on different aspects of the Constitution. 20 teams from across the country participated in the competition.



CLEA- COMMONWEALTH ATTORNEY GENERALS AND SOLICITORS CONFERENCE (CASGC '24) February 2-4, 2024.

CLEA- Commonwealth Attorney Generals and Solicitors Conference (CASGC'24) was held in Delhi from 2nd February to 4th February 2024 at the Plenary Hall, Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi. The theme of the conference was “*Cross-Border Challenges in Justice Delivery*”. The CLEA- Commonwealth Attorney Generals and Solicitors Conference (CASGC'24) was organized by the Government of India (Department of Legal Affairs, Ministry of Law & Justice) Office of the Attorney and Solicitor General of India, Commonwealth Legal Education Association with technical support from the Indian Law Institute, New Delhi. The conference began with a grand Inaugural Ceremony on 3rd February 2024 with the **Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi**, as the Chief Guest and the presence of **the Chief Justice of India Hon'ble Dr. Justice D.Y. Chandrachud** as the Guest of honor. **Prof. (Dr.) S. Sivakumar**, Conference Chair and President of the Commonwealth Legal Education Association and Senior Professor of Indian Law Institute, New Delhi, set the tone for the conference with his “Welcome Address”. **Ld. Hon'ble Shri. Tushar Mehta, Solicitor General of India and Co-chairman of the organizing committee**, in his introductory remarks, asserted that the conference would specifically address the most relevant issue faced by the world, cross-border challenges in justice administration. **Dr. R Venkataramani, Ld. Attorney General for India**, addressed the conference by welcoming all the guests and students. He stressed that it is time for a commonwealth legal exchange platform and commonwealth legal exchanges convention to transform the fundamentals of legal education **Shri Arjun Ram Meghwal, Hon'ble Minister of State (I/C), Law & Justice**, in his address, stated that this conference is a moment to reflect upon the evolved role of Attorney Generals and Solicitor Generals in the larger arena of good governance architecture and their purposeful role upcoming future.



Hon'ble Prime Minister addressing the gathering

Round Table with AGS and SGS of Commonwealth Nations February 3, 2024, 05:00 P.M. – 06:45 P.M.

Motto: Harnessing Collective Expertise, Sharing Experiences, and Developing Effective Strategies: Justice for all

A pivotal highlight of the conference was the Round Table sessions, both with the Attorney Generals (AGs) and Solicitors Generals (SGs) of Commonwealth Nations and with the Advocate Generals (AGs) and Additional Advocate Generals of Indian States and Additional Solicitor Generals of India.



Round table session with the Attorneys General and Solicitors General of Commonwealth nations

Valedictory Ceremony of the conference

The conference culminated with a notable valedictory ceremony with the august presence of **Smt. Draupadi Murmu, Hon'ble President of India**, and **Shri Amit Shah, Hon'ble Minister for Home Affairs, Government of India**.



Amit Shah, Minister of Home Affairs addressing the gathering



Smt. Draupadi Murmu, The President of India at the function

The valedictory ceremony ended with an address by Smt. Draupadi Murmu, The President of India discussed how the legal profession and judiciary help maintain social order. The President of India asserted the role of young minds who participated in the conference can modify the current legal system. She concluded by congratulating the organizing committee for organizing such a successful conference.

The Ministry of Law and Justice, in collaboration with the Indian Law Institute celebrated Constitution Day on November 26, 2023, at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi in an impressive ceremony befitting the occasion.

Shri Jagdeep Dhankhar, the Vice President of India graced the occasion as the Chief Guest and delivered the keynote address. The other distinguished guests were Shri Arjun Ram Meghwal, Minister of State (I/C) for Law, Justice Ritu Raj Awasthi, Chairperson Law Commission, Mr. Tushar Mehta, Solicitor General of India, Justice Shri Arun Kumar Mishra, Chairperson NHRC, Justice Ms Indira Banerjee, Former Judge Supreme Court of India, and Dr. Niten Chandra, Secretary, Dept. of Legal Affairs, Govt of India.

The event began with the traditional lighting of the lamp by the dignitaries on the stage. This was followed by the release of two books published by the Ministry of Law and Justice and Indian Law Institute titled 'A Guide to Alternative Dispute Resolution' and 'Perspectives on Constitution and Development' respectively.

As part of the celebrations this year, a national level transformative Colloquium was also organized featuring five technical sessions from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. The objective of the Colloquium was to explore the crucial link between constitutional values, and global aspirations, with the well-being of the planet and its inhabitants. A book exhibition was also organized at Vigyan Bhawan.

Inauguration of the ILI E-library – 29.01.2024

The E-Library of the Indian Law Institute was inaugurated by Hon'ble Mr. Justice Surya Kant, Judge, Supreme Court of India and Chairman, Library Committee, ILI, in the presence of Dr. Rajiv Mani, Secretary, Legislative Department, Ministry of Law & Justice, New Delhi, Prof. (Dr.) Ranbir Singh, former Vice Chancellor, NLU Delhi, and Prof. (Dr.) Manoj Kumar Sinha, Director, ILI.



Participants in the programme



*Director ILI, Hon'ble Mr. Justice
Surya Kant, Prof. (Dr.) Ranbir Singh*

Indian Law Institute Library provides comprehensive resources and services in support of the research and learning needs of the users. The library has a rich collection of print resources and E-Resources to cater the

varied information needs of users. The Print collection includes 85000 bound volumes and 80+subscribed periodicals. The E-Resources includes of Library include -12 valuable legal databases that covers national and international case laws, peer-reviewed articles, acts, news information, and E-Books *etc* and ILI Digital Repository of ILI publications that includes rare documents freely accessible.

ILI Law Review (ILILR) Legal Research Workshop on “How to Review an Article for Law Journal” held on January 20, 2024

The ILI Law Review (ILILR) Legal Research Workshop themed “How to Review an Article for Law Journal” took place on January 20, 2024, as part of the ILILR-LRW Initiative initiated by the Indian Law Institute (ILI) and ILILR. This inaugural event, led by Workshop Chairperson Prof. (Dr.) Manoj Kumar Sinha, Director ILI, and Editor, ILILR, marked the commencement of a series aimed at elevating the standards of legal research. The workshop committee, consisting of esteemed members such as Prof. (Dr.) Manoj Kumar Sinha, Prof. (Dr.) Anurag Deep, ILI, and Mr. Avinash Kumar Paswan, Ph.D. Scholar, ILI played a pivotal role in orchestrating sessions that provided participants with comprehensive insights into the intricacies of the peer-review process for esteemed law journals.



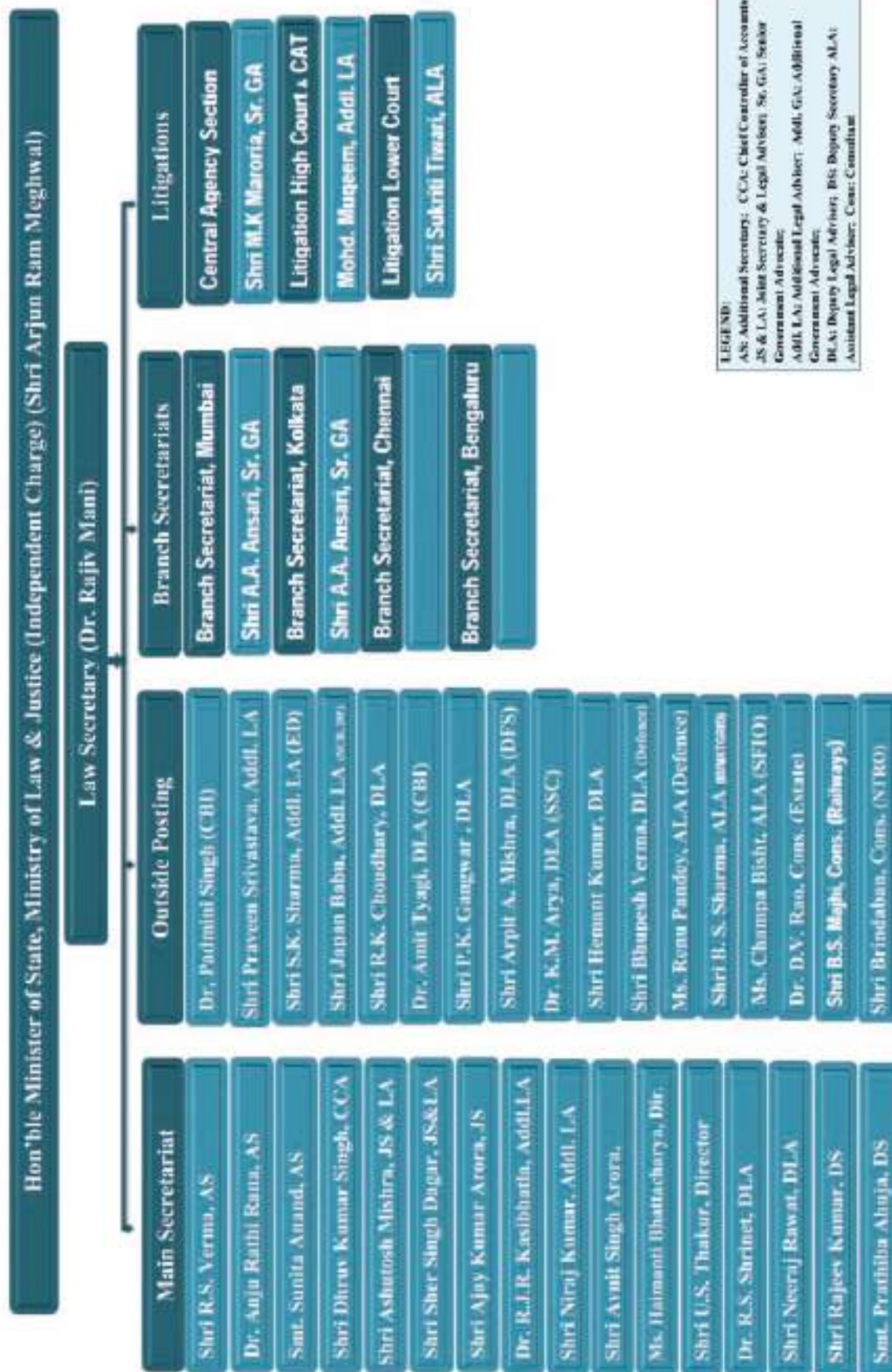
PUBLICATIONS

Research Publications Released

The following research publications have been released by the ILI during the period of report:

- ***Journal of the Indian Law Institute (JILI)*** – Published quarterly containing research articles on contemporary legal issues of National/International Importance.
- ***ILI Newsletter*** – Published quarterly referring to various activities undertaken by the Institute during the year and forthcoming activities.
- ***Index to Legal Periodicals***– Published yearly and contains indexes, periodicals (including yearbooks and other annual publications) pertaining to law and related fields being received (either by subscription or exchange or complementary) by the ILI Library.
- ***Annual Survey of Indian Law*** –Published yearly and is a very prestigious publication of the Institute and contains the Annual Survey of Indian Law including the latest trends in every branch of the law of importance.
- ***Perspectives on Indian Constitution and Development*** – Published by Prof. (Dr.) Manoj Kumar Sinha
- ILI Law Review (Summer) & (Winter)

Annexure-I



ANNEXURE-II

GCS and ILS Cadre:

Group	Total No. of Employees	Scheduled Castes	% of total employees	Scheduled Tribes	% of total employees	Other Backward Classes	% of total employees	Ex-service-men	% of total employees	Physically Handicapped	% of total employees
Group 'A' #	61	9	14.75%	2	3.27%	13	21.31%	00	—	4	6.55%
Group 'B'	47	5	10.63%	3	6.38%	13	27.65%	00	—	02	4.25%
Group 'C' (excluding safaiwala)	41	14	34.14%	4	9.75%	7	17.07%	00	—	01	2.43%
Group 'C' (safaiwala)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
TOTAL	149	28	18.79%	9	6.04%	33	22.14%	00	—	7	4.69%

Representation of Female Employees (As On 31.03.2024)

GROUPS	DEPARTMENT OF LEGAL AFFAIRS	
	TOTAL NO. OF EMPLOYEES	NO. OF FEMALE EMPLOYEES
GROUP A#	61	11
GROUP B	47	07
GROUP C (Excluding Safaiwala)	41	03
GROUP C (Safaiwala)	—	—
TOTAL	149	21

includes information i.r.o. ILS (Legal Adviser and Govt. Advocate Cadre)

ANNEXURE-III

CSS, CSSS, CSCS, CSOLS and GCS (Accountant and Jr. Accountant only) CADRES

Group	Total No. of Employees	Scheduled Castes	% of total employees	Scheduled Tribes	% of total employees	Other Backward Classes	% of total employees	Ex-service men	% of total employees	Physically Handicapped	% of total employees
Group 'A'	79	20	25.31%	04	5.06%	01	1.26%	00	---	00	---
Group 'B'	120	28	23.33%	04	3.33%	24	20%	03	2.5%	05 (HH-1, OH-2, VH-2)	4.16%
Group 'C' (excluding safaiwala)	20	04	20%	02	10%	06	30%	00	---	01(OH)	5%
Group 'C' (safaiwala)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
TOTAL	219	52	23.74%	10	4.56%	31	14.15%	03	1.37%	06	2.74%

* The above statement includes information in respect of posts existing in Legislative Department, Law Commission and Central Agency Section also pertaining to cadres being controlled by this Department.

* The above statement does not include information about posts in Income Tax Appellate Tribunal (ITAT).

REPRESENTATION OF FEMALE EMPLOYEES (as on 31.03.2024)

GROUPS	DEPARTMENT OF LEGAL AFFAIRS (Including Legislative Department)	
	TOTAL NO. OF EMPLOYEES	NO. OF FEMALE EMPLOYEES
GROUP A	79	26
GROUP B	120	35
GROUP C (Excluding Safaiwala)	20	02
GROUP C (Safaiwala)	—	—
TOTAL	219	63

includes information i.r.o. ILS (Legal Adviser and Govt. Advocate Cadre)

ANNEXURE-IV

Total number of Employees of I.T.A.T. including SCs, STs, OBCs, ExS, PH as on 31.03.2024

GROUP A	No of employees	GEN	SC	ST	OBC	Ex-service men	PH
President	1	1	-	-	-	-	-
Vice President	7	5	-	-	2	-	-
Accountant Member	53	39	3	1	10	-	-
Judicial Member	54	38	7	0	9	-	-
Registrar	0	0	-	-	-	-	-
Deputy Registrar	1	1	-	-	-	-	-
Assistant Registrar	11	6	2	1	2	-	-
Hindi Officer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	127	90	12	2	23	-	-

GROUP B	No of employees	GEN	SC	ST	OBC	Ex-servicemen				PH			
						SC	ST	OBC	GEN	SC	ST	OBC	GEN
Senior P.S.	81	49	13	2	17	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Private Secretary	7	1	3	0	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Superintendent	4	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Office Suptd.	44	27	6	2	8	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Hindi Translator	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Senior Accountant	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Librarian	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	138	82	23	4	28	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0

Note: 07 post of Sr. Hindi Translator filled on Ad-hoc basis

GROUP C	No of employees	GEN	SC	ST	OBC	Ex-servicemen				PH			
						SC	ST	OBC	GEN	SC	ST	OBC	GEN
Upper Division Clerk	116	49	24	8	32	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2
Steno Grade 'D'	01	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lower Division Clerk	116	46	23	8	36	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1
Staff Car Driver	22	5	9	1	6	-	0	-	1	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	255	101	56	17	74	0	0	0	1	0	0	3	3

	No of employees	GEN	SC	ST	OBC	Ex-servicemen				PH			
						SC	ST	OBC	GEN	SC	ST	OBC	GEN
Multi-Tasking Staff	159	45	51	14	37	1	-	1	4	4	-	1	1
TOTAL	159	45	51	14	37	1	-	1	4	4	-	1	1



भारत सरकार

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

विधि और न्याय मंत्रालय
Ministry of Law and Justice