

Progress on Legislative Reforms

प्रविष्टि तिथि: 07 AUG 2026 11:57PM by PIB Delhi

Legislative and policy interventions along with related reforms for promoting ease of doing business is a continuous process being undertaken by the Government, keeping in view the changing requirements of the stakeholders. The Government continues to take steps to reduce the criminalisation of minor violations and replace them with more proportionate civil penalties and administrative mechanisms under various enactments. In this regard, recognising the need to make laws more balanced and practical, the Government began a process of reviewing provisions. An important step in this direction was the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Act, 2023, which removed criminal penalties for a number of minor offences across several Central laws. Pursuant thereto, the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Act, 2026 was published in the Official Gazette on 8 April 2026, which rationalizes provisions across 79 Central Acts administered by 23 Ministries and Departments. The reforms are aimed at promoting trust-based governance, reducing compliance burden, improving ease of doing business, and ensuring proportionate regulatory enforcement.

(b): The Government continues to promote alternate dispute resolution (ADR) mechanisms including arbitration and mediation in the country, as these mechanisms are less adversarial and are capable of providing a better substitute to the conventional methods of resolving disputes. The Government is further taking policy and legislative interventions, to strengthen these mechanisms and make them more efficacious and expeditious.

The major initiatives, steps and measures taken by the Central Government over the years in this regard include with respect to the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996 which has been progressively amended in the years 2015, 2019 and 2020 to keep pace with current developments in the arbitration landscape and to enable arbitration as a viable dispute resolution mechanism. The amendments are aimed at ensuring timely conclusion of arbitration proceedings, neutrality of arbitrators, minimizing judicial intervention in the arbitral process, efficacious enforcement of arbitral awards and promotion of institutional arbitration.

The Commercial Courts Act, 2015 was also amended in the year 2018 to provide *inter-alia* for Pre-Institution Mediation and Settlement (PIMS) mechanism. Under this mechanism, where a commercial dispute of specified value does not contemplate any urgent interim relief, the parties have to first exhaust the mandatory remedy of PIMS before approaching the Court. This is aimed at providing an opportunity to the parties to resolve the commercial disputes through mediation.

The India International Arbitration Centre Act, 2019, was enacted to provide for the establishment of the India International Arbitration Centre for the purpose of creating an independent, autonomous and world class body for facilitating institutional arbitration and to declare the Centre to be an institution of national importance. The Centre has since been established and aims to inspire confidence amongst parties, both domestic and international, by providing a neutral dispute resolution platform for resolution of commercial disputes through arbitration.

The Mediation Act, 2023, lays down the legislative framework for mediation to be adopted by disputing parties, especially under the aegis of institutional mediation. The Mediation Act, 2023 is also expected to be a pivotal legislative intervention towards providing standalone law on mediation and enabling the growth of a culture of amicable settlement of disputes out of court.

Further, the aforesaid interventions from time to time have contributed towards improving and strengthening the ADR landscape, supporting the ease of doing business and enabling the country being seen as an attractive destination for investments and economic growth.

The Authorities constituted under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 are also promoting alternate dispute resolution mechanisms including Mediation. These Authorities have been making efforts through legal awareness programmes and to strengthen the court annexed mediation as well as Pre Institution Mediation.

The details of the cases settled by Legal Services Authorities through Mediation in the last two years is as under:

Years	Cases settled
2024-25	98,406
2025-26	2,25,647

(c): India has undertaken sustained reforms over the past years to improve its business regulatory environment. The government's focus has gradually shifted from a compliance-heavy system to a facilitation-driven ecosystem. Reforms have aimed at enhancing speed, transparency, and trust-based governance across processes. Consequently, this has resulted in growing investor confidence in India's business environment and improved Ease of Doing Business (EoDB).

In the latest Doing Business Report, 2020 released by the World Bank on 24th October, 2019, overall India stands at 63rd position out of 190 countries. Since 2014, India's rank has gone up from 142 to 63 in 2019. However, the EoDB exercise was discontinued by the World Bank in the year 2020.

(d): The Centrally Sponsored Scheme for the Development of Infrastructure Facilities for District and Subordinate Courts is regularly appraised by the Department Related Parliamentary Standing Committee and internal audit teams. In addition, the Scheme has been evaluated by third-party under the aegis of NITI Aayog at the time of extension of the Scheme. The latest third-party report *inter-alia* mentions that the Scheme demonstrates high relevance by strongly aligning its objective for infrastructure development with national policies, sustainable development goals and the needs of its beneficiaries. Further, the report mentions that the districts with higher court room density have reported a 3-8% decline in average case pendency and further highlighted that there is 16% reduction in case resolution time reducing from 3.1 years to 2.6 years in District Courts.

This was stated by the Minister of State (Independent Charge) of The Ministry of Law and Justice; and Minister of State in the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs, Shri Arjun Ram Meghwal in a written reply to a question in the Lok Sabha.

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इस विज्ञप्ति को इन भाषाओं में पढ़ें: Urdu , हिन्दी