

**SPEECH OF HON'BLE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE  
AT THE CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS OF  
PATNA HIGH COURT  
HELD ON APRIL 18, 2015**

It is an honour and privilege to be a part of celebrations to commemorate 100 years of glorious existence of High Court of Judicature at Patna. It is a matter of pride that Dr. Rajendra Prasad and Dr. Sachidanand Sinha were from this institution.

High Courts in India, including the High Court of Judicature at Patna, have played an important constitutional role in ensuring that our democratic governance both at Central and State Level is based on the principle of Rule of Law. The High Courts and the Subordinate Courts have an unenviable task of delivering timely, affordable and quality justice to millions of citizens. However, the judiciary faces a tough challenge of delays in disposal of cases and accumulation of arrears and backlog. Judiciary needs to find solutions to deal with this situation so that our people are not made to wait for unduly long period of time before their cases are disposed of in courts.

I would like to assure you that the Government of India is strongly committed to work with judiciary so that this challenge can be overcome. Increasing the number of courts and judicial officers at all levels is the first step towards achieving timely delivery of justice. On account of the concerted efforts made in this direction, the sanctioned strength of judges and judicial officers in both High Courts and subordinate courts has increased significantly in the last year. I expect this trend to continue over the coming years and I am sure this will be handled effectively.

Apart from increasing the strength of judges, development of judicial infrastructure is also a priority area. The provision of good infrastructure is a stepping-stone towards more efficient delivery of justice. The Central Government has been coordinating on these issues with High Courts and State Governments, and releasing funds for this purpose through a centrally sponsored scheme for infrastructure development.

I also wholeheartedly support the adoption of information and communication technology in the judicial system. Computerisation of courts and digitization of records facilitates better identification and classification of cases, more efficient management of court time and improved tracking of overall pendency trends. All of this bodes well for the end users of the judicial system as it will help in reducing unnecessary delays and bring information to their fingertips. The process of computerisation of district and subordinate courts is underway through the eCourts Integrated Mission Mode project. We are in the process of creation of National Judicial Data Grid which can bring multiple benefits to all stakeholders, including the litigants

The Government is also strongly committed to the cause of simplifying legal procedures, weeding out contradictory and redundant laws and significantly reducing the number of cases in which the Government is a litigant. For this purpose, the Government is working towards the adoption of National Litigation Policy that will be geared towards avoiding unnecessary Government litigation.

The processes, time taken and costs involved in the resolution of commercial cases pending in our legal system need to be improved in order to improve the ease of doing business in the country. This is imperative for the success of the Make in India campaign launched by the Government. Some High Courts having original civil jurisdiction have initiated positive steps in this direction by designating certain courts as “commercial courts” for exclusively handling commercial cases. In this direction, my Ministry is working on a Bill for constituting Commercial Courts and the same may be introduced in Parliament shortly. At the same time we also need to focus on training and specialization of judges in areas relating to commercial laws.

Huge pendency in our courts has made it imperative to explore the use of alternative modes of dispute resolution (ADR) such as mediation, conciliation and arbitration. I am happy to see that the number of court complexes having ADR centres in the Districts and Talukas in the State of Bihar is on the rise. I encourage courts in the State to contribute to this endeavour by making optimum use of provisions like Section 89 of the Code of Civil Procedure which allow for reference of civil disputes to various ADR forums. We are in the process of making necessary legislative changes in Arbitration and Conciliation Act to ensure that the arbitration process is not only efficient, but also is transparent and instils faith in the parties.

To conclude, I once again thank the organisers of Centenary Celebration of Patna High Court for offering me the opportunity to address this august gathering.

\*\*\*\*\*