

New Lady Justice

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What does the new 'lady justice' statue signify?

Background:

1. The **'new lady justice'** statue was unveiled by the Chief Justice of India in the Supreme Court, replacing the **'original lady justice.'**
2. The new statue is **clothed in a saree, has no blindfold, holds scales in one hand and the Indian Constitution in the other.**
3. The modern-day **'lady justice'** originates from Justitia, the Roman goddess of Justice.
4. Traditionally, **'lady justice'** is depicted with:
 - A **blindfold** (added during the Renaissance period as satire on legal corruption and later reinterpreted as impartiality).
 - **Scales** (representing balance and the weighing of both sides of an argument before judgment).
 - A **sword** (symbolising the power and authority of the law to both protect and punish).

Why the Change?

1. During British rule, the **'lady justice'** symbol became prominent in Indian courts.
2. The new statue represents a decolonial approach, moving away from colonial symbols.
3. The saree brings the statue closer to Indian tradition.
4. The **open eyes**, instead of a blindfold, signify that Indian law 'sees' everyone equally, reflecting the need for a nuanced approach considering social diversity and discrimination.
5. The sword is replaced by the Constitution, symbolising its supremacy in Indian jurisprudence.
6. The scales remain, signifying impartial weighing of evidence and hearing both sides.

Urgent Actions Needed:

1. **Pendency of Cases:** The Supreme Court dismissed a PIL seeking a time frame for disposal of **over five crore pending cases** due to practical challenges in handling the litigation flood.
2. **Memorandum of Procedure:** The process of finalising the revised **Memorandum of Procedure (MoP) for judge appointments** has been pending for eight years, needing finalisation to ensure transparency.
3. **Diversity in Judiciary:** Representation of **backward classes, scheduled castes, tribes, and minorities in higher judiciary is below 25%, with women constituting less than 15%.** Appointments should reflect the country's social diversity.
4. **Vacancies in Courts:** High Courts operate at only **60-70% strength**, contributing to the pendency of over 60 lakh cases. The government should expedite collegium recommendations for High Court appointments, and States should fill vacancies in lower courts where 4.4 crore cases are pending.

5. **Constitutional and Liberty Cases:** Cases concerning constitutional amendments and individual liberty should be given priority in higher courts to ensure swift and fair justice delivery.

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