

CJI RAISES CONCERN OVER BACKLOG OF CRIMINAL CASES IN ALLAHABAD HC

Relevant for: Polity | Topic: Judiciary in India: its Structure, Organization & Functioning, Judges of SC & High Courts, Judgments and related Issues

Chief Justice of India N.V. Ramana on Saturday said the pendency of criminal cases in the Allahabad High Court was “very worrying”.

“I do not want to point any fingers or lay any blame regarding the pendency in the Allahabad High Court relating to criminal cases, which is very worrying. I request the Allahabad Bar and Bench to work together and co-operate to resolve this issue,” the Chief Justice said.

Chief Justice of India Ramana was speaking at the foundation stone laying ceremony for the National Law University in the Uttar Pradesh, the new multi-level parking and advocates’ chamber complex in the Allahabad High Court, and the unveiling of the portrait of the late Anand Bhushan Saran, veteran advocate and the father of Supreme Court judge Justice Vineet Saran.

The CJI expressed his concerns over the case pendency in the presence of President Ram Nath Kovind, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, Law Minister Kiren Rijiju and Supreme Court and High Court judges and lawyers at the ceremony in Prayagraj.

The CJI recalled the 150-year-old history of the Allahabad High Court and its legacy of producing some of the greatest legal luminaries in the country.

“This Bar has left an indelible mark in India’s freedom struggle and the drafting of our Constitution. I expect you to carry forward the extraordinary legacy, tradition and culture of this historic Bar. I urge you all, to take a lead in protecting the rights, liberties and freedoms of the citizens,” Chief Justice Ramana said.

According to an affidavit filed by the U.P. government in the Supreme Court in August, the Allahabad High Court has 1.83 lakh pending criminal appeals. The High Court has 68 judicial vacancies out of a total sanctioned strength of 160 judges, according to the Department of Justice statistics as on September 1.

Increase efficiency

President Kovind also highlighted the need to expedite the disposal of pending cases and increasing the efficiency of the subordinate judiciary as the “need of the hour”. The President noted that the judicial process would be strengthened with the arrangement of adequate facilities for the subordinate judiciary, increasing the number of working judges and providing enough resources as per the provisions of the budget.

In his speech, the CJI said the country “neglected and failed to focus on providing good infrastructure for courts in India after the British left”. Chief Justice Ramana reiterated the need to form a National Judicial Infrastructure Corporation (NJIC) to help courts come out of the dilapidated structures and the “severely detrimental” and “unpleasant work environment”.

“The NJIC shall be along the lines of different infrastructure development statutory bodies that work towards creating national assets across the country. One of the design principles that the NJIC will follow is socially responsible and inclusive architecture,” Chief Justice Ramana said.

In his speech, Mr. Rijju said the government intends to table a new Bill on mediation. The Law Minister said the government believes in judicial independence and wants to strengthen the judiciary.

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