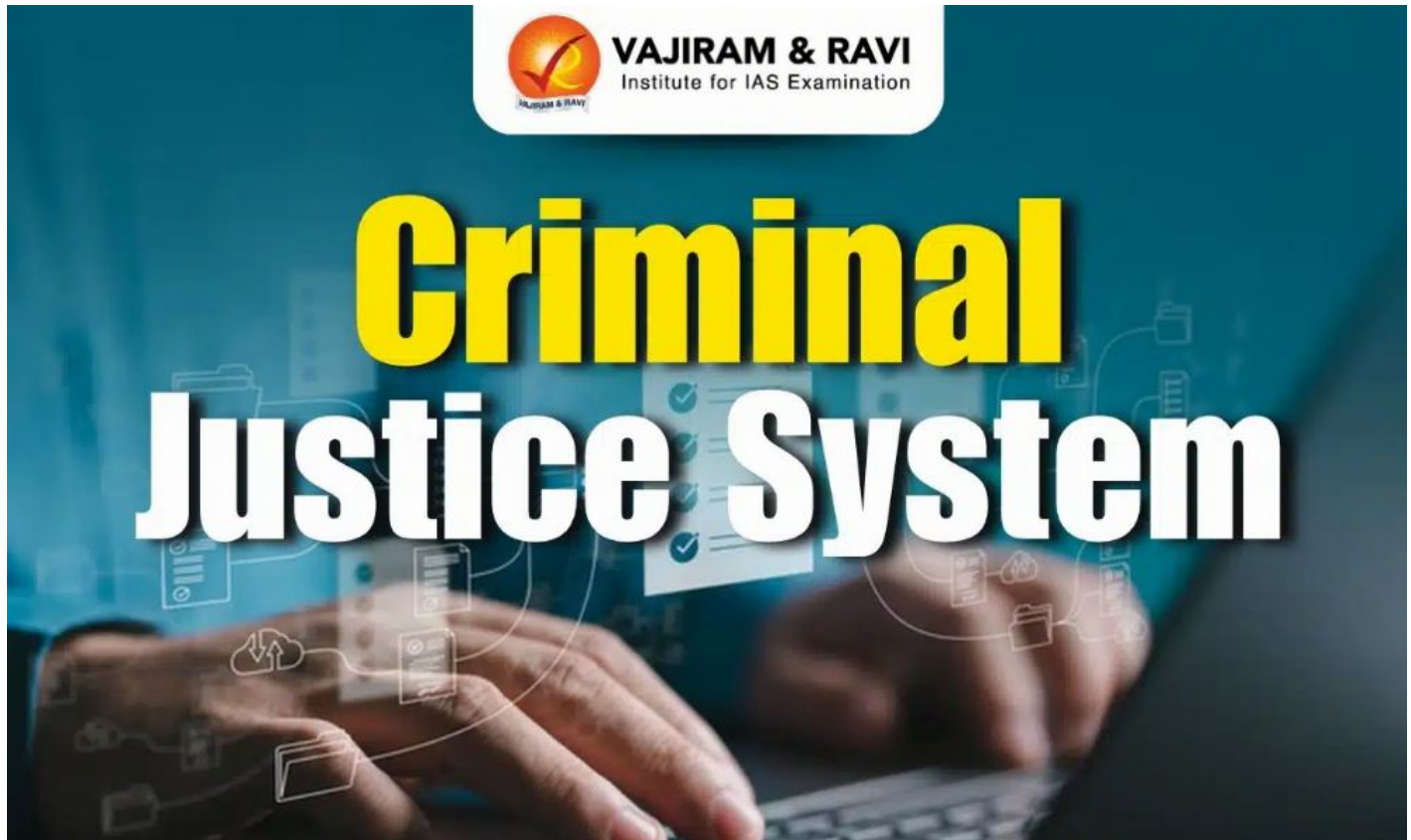


Criminal Justice System Digital Push - ICJS Rollout Targeted by 2027

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Criminal Justice System Latest News

- The Union Home Ministry has said that from January 1, 2027, procedures related to investigations and trials under the new criminal laws will be recorded digitally through the Interoperable Criminal Justice System.

Interoperable Criminal Justice System

- The Interoperable Criminal Justice System (ICJS) is a **national digital platform** designed to connect the key pillars of the criminal justice system on a single network. It seeks to integrate:
 - Police
 - Courts
 - Prisons
 - Forensic laboratories
 - Prosecution

- The objective is to create an end-to-end digital workflow so that criminal cases can move more efficiently from FIR registration to investigation, chargesheet filing, trial, and final disposal.
- The data under this system is being stored on **MeghRaj**, the Government of India's cloud platform.
- This digital push has gained importance after the implementation of the three new criminal laws on July 1, 2024:
 - Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) replacing the Indian Penal Code
 - Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) replacing the Code of Criminal Procedure
 - Bharatiya Sakshya Sanhita (BSS) replacing the Indian Evidence Act
- These new laws require stronger digital systems, better forensic support, and smoother coordination among institutions.

News Summary

- The Union Home Ministry has indicated that India's criminal justice system is moving toward a full digital rollout by January 1, 2027, when procedures related to all investigations and trials under the new criminal laws are expected to be recorded digitally.
- A senior official said the nationwide implementation of ICJS is nearing completion, but the available data also reveal major gaps in actual performance.

FIR Transmission Still Weak

- Data maintained by the **National Crime Records Bureau** (NCRB) show that only 46% of FIRs were digitally transmitted to courts.
- This process, called FIR consumption by courts, reflects whether cases are electronically shared and received by the judicial system.
- Since this is less than half of all registered cases, it shows that the digital chain remains incomplete.

Large Number of Cases Under New Laws

- Since the new laws came into effect:
 - 74.66 lakh FIRs have been filed under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS)
 - 63,572 zero-FIRs have been registered under the BNSS
- Zero-FIRs are complaints that can be filed regardless of jurisdiction, and later transferred to the police station concerned.
- Of these, around 13,000 were filed in different districts of the same state and classified as intra-state transfers.
- The Home Ministry official clarified that police cannot refuse to register a zero-FIR.
- Once registered, the concerned police station can decide whether to close the case after inquiry or continue with the investigation.

Crime and Criminal Tracking and Network Systems

- FIRs are being filed through the **Crime and Criminal Tracking and Network Systems** (CCTNS) platform, which operates across 16,000 police stations.
- The platform allows case registration in 23 languages, and the Bhashini App can translate zero-FIRs into the language used in the jurisdiction where the case is transferred.
- **State-Level Progress**
 - Of the 36 States and Union Territories Haryana, Goa, Assam, Punjab and Chandigarh have implemented all parameters of the criminal justice digitisation system.
 - In addition, 23 States and UTs, including Delhi, are above the national average.
 - The official noted that some northeastern States are lagging mainly because of connectivity issues.

Forensic Expansion

- The new criminal laws make forensic examination of crime scenes mandatory in offences punishable with seven years or more. To support this:
 - The number of forensic laboratories increased from 129 in 2023 to 154 in 2025
 - 25 new forensic laboratories were added in two years
 - More than 700 mobile forensic units have been deployed
- The numbers also show rising forensic demand:
 - In 2023, forensic labs received 8,44,589 cases, with 4,64,879 pending
 - In 2025, cases received rose to 11,11,798, with 3,90,786 pending
 - This means capacity has improved, but demand on forensic systems is also growing rapidly.

Improvement in National Implementation Score

- The national implementation score under the new laws increased from:
 - 46.47% in January 2025
 - To 70.06% in June 2026
- Other improvements include:
 - 60-day chargesheet compliance rising from about 51% to 67%
 - 90-day chargesheet compliance rising from about 40% to 61%
 - 46.5 lakh digital evidence (Sakshya) IDs generated
 - 56.74 lakh e-summons served

Size of the National Police Database

- As of May 31, 2026, the national police database held 37.68 crore police records, including 9.9 crore FIRs & 7.64 crore chargesheets.
- These records can be accessed by police and investigating agencies, making the system a major national repository of criminal justice data.

Key Challenges Ahead

- Improving internet connectivity, especially in remote and north-eastern regions

- Standardising processes across states and UTs
- Ensuring full interoperability among police, court, prison, prosecution, and forensic systems
- Training personnel to work with digital platforms effectively

Significance

- This digital transition is significant because it aims to replace fragmented, paper-based procedures with an integrated, real-time criminal justice process. If implemented properly, it could:
 - Speed up investigations
 - Reduce delays in chargesheets and trials
 - Improve evidence handling
 - Strengthen coordination among justice institutions
 - Make the system more transparent and traceable
- At the same time, the low FIR transmission rate and uneven implementation across states show that the digital transition is still incomplete.
- The real test will be whether the system becomes genuinely interoperable and reliable in everyday practice, not just in design.

Source: TH

Source: <https://vajiramandravi.com/current-affairs/criminal-justice-system-push/>

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