

Andhra Pradesh Disha (Special Courts for Specified Offences against Women and Children) Bill, 2020

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In News: The Union government informed the Lok Sabha that an inter-ministerial consultation for the Andhra Pradesh Disha (Special Courts for Specified Offences against Women and Children) Bill, 2020, had been initiated and based on the inputs, the Bill would be processed further.

Feature of the Disha Bill

- As per the Bill, the Andhra Pradesh government will establish, operate and maintain a register in electronic form, to be called the 'Women & Children Offenders Registry'. This registry will be made public and will be available to law enforcement agencies.
- Exclusive punishment of death penalty in cases relating to rape and murder of a woman where there is adequate conclusive evidence.
- The judgment will have to be pronounced in 21 working days from date of offence in cases of rape crimes with substantial conclusive evidence.
- The Bill prescribes life imprisonment for sexual offences against children as the existing punishment for molestation/sexual assault on children under the POCSO Act, 2012 ranges minimum of three years to a maximum of seven years of imprisonment.
- In cases of harassment of women through email, social media, digital mode or any other form, the guilty shall be punishable with imprisonment. At present no such provision exists in the Indian Penal Code.

- Exclusive special courts in each district of the State to ensure speedy trial. These courts will exclusively deal with cases of offences against women and children including rape, acid attacks, stalking, voyeurism, social media harassment of women, sexual harassment and all cases under the POCSO Act.
- Constitution of special police teams and appointment of the special public prosecutor in special courts. There is no such provision in existing laws.
- Bill paves the way for awarding death penalty for rape and gang rape and expediting verdicts in trials of such cases to 21 days.

Tackling crime

The key aspects of the A.P. Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill, 2019, which will be tabled in the ongoing winter session of the State Legislature

- **Death penalty** for heinous offences of **rape and gang-rape**

- Probe and trial will be completed in **7 and 14 working days** respectively

- Judgment time reduced to **21 days** from the existing **4 months**

It will be known as **A.P. Disha Act, 2019**



STOP RAPE