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A K Lakshmanan is new Law Commission chairman

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NEW DELHI: After keeping the post vacant for nine months, the government has appointed A K Lakshmanan, a retired judge of the Supreme Court, as chairman of the Law Commission.

Significantly, the appointment comes in the wake of criticism by Standing Committee on Law and Justice in its report submitted in Budget session of Parliament which said the "there should not be a gap even for a day" in appointment of Commission's chairman.

The pressure to make the appointment had increased on the government after it failed to give any convincing explanation to the Parliamentary committee on several occasions for the delay in filling the post.

The 18th Law Commission was constituted as the term of the 17th Law Commission, headed by M Jagannadha Rao, ended on August 31 last year.

Lakshmanan was embroiled in a controversy last March when he broke down in the court and refused to hear the disproportionate assets case against the then UP Chief Minister Mulayam Singh Yadav saying he has received an anonymous letter containing certain allegations and was under pressure.

He retired a few days later.

Successive commissions have submitted 196 reports so far on a gamut of issues in the sphere of law and justice -ranging from recommending the mode of execution in death sentence to repeal of several laws and provision which are obsolete or subject to misuse.

But unlike in the UK and Canada, the Law Commission in India has only advisory status, not statutory.