

# First Lokpal takes charge

## President administers Ghose oath of office

NEW DELHI, DHNS: India got its first Lokpal on Saturday, when former Supreme Court Judge Pinaki Chandra Ghose was administered the oath of office by President Ram Nath Kovind here.

Justice Ghose took the oath of office in the presence of Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi at a brief function in Rashtrapati Bhawan.

The appointment of a Lokpal had run into a nearly five-year delay as the Modi government had argued about the need to change the Lokpal Act to accommodate the leader of the single-largest party in the Opposition in the decision-making process.

In April 2017, the Supreme Court rejected the government's contention and directed it to go ahead, even in the absence of the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, as mandated by the law.

Mallikarjun Kharge, the leader of the Congress, the single-largest party in opposition

in the Lok Sabha, boycotted the meetings of the Lokpal Selection Committee, arguing that as a 'special invitee' to the meetings, he would only get to observe the proceedings and not get an opportunity to record his views.

Though the idea of Lokpal has been around for more than 50 years, it took an agitation by social activist Anna Hazare in 2011 to bring the focus back on the anti-corruption ombudsman.

Former Chief Justices of different high courts - Justices Dilip B Bhosale, Pradip Kumar Mohanty, Abhilasha Kumari - besides sitting Chief Justice of Chhattisgarh High Court Ajay Kumar Tripathi were appointed as judicial members in the Lokpal on Tuesday.

Former first woman chief of Sashtra Seema Bal Archana Ramasundaram, ex-Maharashtra chief secretary Dinesh Kumar Jain, former IRS officer Mahender Singh and Gujarat cadre ex-IAS officer Indrajeet Prasad Gautam were appointed the Lokpal's non-judicial members.



Justice Pinaki Chandra Ghose being administered the oath of office as Chairperson of Lokpal, at Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi, on Saturday. PTI



Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Justice of India Justice Ranjan Gogoi during the oath ceremony of First Chairperson of Lokpal in New Delhi. PTI