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## THE JAN VISHWAS BILL 2026: DECRIMINALIZING BUSINESS AND ITS IMPACT ON EASE OF DOING BUSINESS IN INDIA

~ *Shivansh Sharma*

### INTRODUCTION

It has long been noticed in Indian administration that rules treat companies as if disaster looms just ahead. Decades shaped a system where breaking rules is seen not by mistake but by intent, expecting owners only obey when jail hangs overhead. Instead of fines or warnings, punishment often meant prison, chosen more than softer oversight tools. That thinking led to countless crimes defined in law - buried in many acts - for things like missing updates on paperwork or using incorrect lettering on packaging.

On April 1, 2026, the Lok Sabha approved the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, aiming to reshape long-standing legal structures.<sup>1</sup> This new version pushes much further than its predecessor, the 2023 Act<sup>2</sup>, reaching into far more laws. Instead of small tweaks, it adjusts 784 sections spread over 79 national statutes - most removing criminal charges completely, while others soften rules for daily life. Rather than strict punishment every time, penalties now depend on severity, with systems put in place to judge cases fairly. Reviews happen at intervals, ensuring consequences stay reasonable. Taken together, these changes reflect a shift - not just policy tweaking - but how regulation thinks about people.

Success out there hinges less on laws than on how offices operate, their strength to act, and whether leaders truly commit. What follows weighs the Bill's pledges against its actual results plus gaps still open wide.

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<sup>1</sup> Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2026, as passed by the Lok Sabha on April 1, 2026, introduced by Jitin Prasada, Minister of State for Commerce and Industry. See Press Information Bureau, Gov't of India, *MoS Jitin Prasada Introduces Jan Vishwas Bill 2026 in Lok Sabha* (Mar. 27, 2026), <https://www.newsonair.gov.in>.

<sup>2</sup> Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Act, No. 18 of 2023, available at <https://egazette.gov.in> (Presidential assent received Aug. 11, 2023).

## **BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT**

### **1. THE PROBLEM OF OVERCRIMINALIZATION**

India didn't actually set out to treat every minor business slip-up as a crime. Much of our current regulatory mess is just a hangover from colonial-era laws, written back when rulers preferred throwing people in jail over simple civil fines.<sup>3</sup> After Independence, successive governments just kept piling on new laws without ever questioning this harsh foundation. The result? A business climate where a simple, first-time paperwork mistake could get an entrepreneur arrested, prosecuted, and publicly humiliated.

A 2022 government review revealed just how absurd things had gotten: there were around 7,305 criminal offenses buried across 370 Central Acts, and roughly 5,333 of them could land you in prison.<sup>4</sup> The wildest part? Most of these "crimes" hurt absolutely no one. We are talking about typos in compliance forms, missed filing deadlines, minor labelling mistakes, or simple clerical errors. For decades, this heavy-handed approach terrified aspiring entrepreneurs, especially small and medium business owners (SMEs) who couldn't afford a small army of lawyers.

### **2. THE 2023 ACT: A BEGINNING**

Starting things off, the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Act, 2023 marked an early push to fix long-standing regulatory clutter.<sup>5</sup> Into motion it went during December 2022 when the Ministry of Commerce and Industry introduced it in the Lok Sabha. From there, oversight shifted to a Joint Parliamentary Committee under Shri P.P. Chaudhary's guidance - its findings sealed by March 17 that year.<sup>6</sup> Approval came later, on August 11, once the President gave consent. That green light smoothed out 183 outdated rules spread through 42 national laws handled by 19 separate ministries.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> See generally Soli J. Sorabjee & Lalit Bhasin, *Arbitrariness and Its Consequences: Administrative Law in India* 45–49 (2d ed. 2016) (discussing the colonial inheritance of punitive administrative regulation).

<sup>4</sup> See Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Gov't of India, Statement of Objects and Reasons, Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2025 (Aug. 18, 2025) (noting the pre-reform regulatory landscape of approximately 7,305 criminal offences across 370 Central Acts, including 5,333 provisions carrying imprisonment).

<sup>5</sup> Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Act, No. 18 of 2023, *supra* note 2.

<sup>6</sup> Joint Parliamentary Committee on the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2022, Report of the Joint Parliamentary Committee, Lok Sabha (Mar. 17, 2023) (chaired by Shri P.P. Chaudhary).

<sup>7</sup> *Id.*; see also Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Gov't of India, Press Note on Enactment of the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Act, 2023 (Aug. 2023).

Relief spread fast through companies big and small. The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) highlighted how industries such as technology, pharmaceuticals, and renewable energy finally got space to move, after legal threats over minor issues froze progress.<sup>8</sup> What stood out most was proof - sweeping reforms in regulation could actually happen, not just live in speeches.

### 3. THE PATH TO 2026

Bolstered by early wins, eyes turned to bigger goals. Come August 2025, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry dropped the Jan Vishwas Bill, 2025 into the Lok Sabha - focused on softening 355 outdated rules hiding in 16 Central Laws.<sup>9</sup> Straight away, it landed with a committee in the lower house, guided by Shri Tejasvi Surya. Not one for quiet talks, they ran 49 gruelling meetings instead - pulling in business leaders, lawyers, even regular people - to map where things had gone off track.<sup>10</sup>

On March 13, 2026, once the committee submitted its findings, it pushed hard for bolder moves from the government. Instead of small steps, they pressed for including 62 more Central Acts and stretching reforms deeper into current rules. Seeing that signal, officials dropped the 2025 draft without delay. A much broader version - the Jan Vishwas Bill, 2026 - emerged soon after. Jitin Prasada, serving as Minister of State, presented it on March 27, 2026.<sup>11</sup> Without waiting around, members in the Lok Sabha approved it quickly by April 1, 2026.

## KEY FEATURES OF THE JAN VISHWAS BILL 2026

### 1. SCALE OF DECRIMINALIZATION

The most immediately striking feature of the 2026 Bill is its sheer scale. It amends 784 provisions across 79 Central Acts administered by 23 Ministries, a nearly fourfold expansion from the 183 provisions covered by the 2023 Act.<sup>12</sup> While most of these adjustments - 717 in

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<sup>8</sup> Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), *Decriminalisation and Ease of Doing Business: Industry Assessment of the Jan Vishwas Act 2023*, Annual Policy Review 12 (2024) (statement of Director General Chandrajit Banerjee). See also IMPRI Impact and Policy Research Institute, *Jan Vishwas Bill 2.0, 2025 – Envisioning A Business Friendly Future* (Apr. 28, 2025), <https://www.impriindia.com>.

<sup>9</sup> Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2025, Bill No. 69 of 2025, introduced in Lok Sabha on Aug. 18, 2025 (proposing amendments to 355 provisions across 16 Central Acts administered by 10 Ministries).

<sup>10</sup> Select Committee of the Lok Sabha on the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2025, Report of the Select Committee (Mar. 13, 2026) (chaired by Shri Tejasvi Surya; based on 49 sittings and extensive stakeholder consultations).

<sup>11</sup> See Newsonair, *MoS for Commerce & Industry Jitin Prasada Introduces Jan Vishwas Bill 2026 in Lok Sabha* (Mar. 27, 2026), <https://www.newsonair.gov.in>.

<sup>12</sup> Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2026, Statement of Objects and Reasons ¶ 3 (stating that 784 provisions across 79 Central Acts are proposed to be amended, of which 717 are decriminalised and 67 amended for ease of living).

total - remove or shift criminal punishments, a smaller set of 67 updates aims to simplify everyday life for regular people.

Spanning areas like healthcare rules, worker protections, transport systems, environmental standards, patent rights, food oversight, and trade policies, the scope touches many parts of daily life. Where jail terms once applied under the 1940 Drugs and Cosmetics Act for specific violations, fines now reach ₹1 lakh or triple the worth of seized items - whichever climbs higher.<sup>13</sup> Instead of immediate punishment under the 2009 Legal Metrology Act, companies may receive “improvement notices,” giving them time-limited chances to fix issues before facing consequences.<sup>14</sup>

## **2. ADJUDICATION MECHANISM**

What stands out in the Bill is its creation of a clear system for handling disputes. Instead of sending each rule breach to criminal court - a slow, costly method ill-suited to small offenses - it allows for trained officials to review cases and impose non-criminal fines.<sup>15</sup> These decisions are not final; an independent body can reexamine them, offering a route tailored to the industry’s needs while remaining straightforward and reachable. This approach tackles one part of an old problem in India’s oversight framework - the lack of specialized tools forcing authorities to choose between harsh legal penalties or inaction. When backed by adequate personnel and real-world implementation, a layered decision-making structure may bring better balance and stronger prevention outcomes.

## **3. GRADED ENFORCEMENT AND AUTOMATIC REVISION OF FINES**

A different approach to enforcement appears in the Bill, one that adjusts responses based on severity. When an issue happens for the first time or stays small, warnings come before fines. Improvement notices may follow if behaviour does not change. On the other hand, patterns of disregard bring stronger actions over time. Serious breaches - especially those threatening

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<sup>13</sup> Id. ¶ 4 (amending the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940; replacing imprisonment for certain contraventions with a civil penalty of ₹1 lakh or three times the value of confiscated goods, whichever is higher). *See also* Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Gov’t of India, Statement on Jan Vishwas Bill 2026 Amendments to Pharmaceutical Regulation (Apr. 2026).

<sup>14</sup> Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2026 (amending the Legal Metrology Act, 2009, to introduce improvement notices allowing businesses a specified period to rectify non-compliance before penalty imposition).

<sup>15</sup> Id. (providing for the appointment of adjudicating officers for inquiry and determination of civil penalties, and appellate authorities for appeals against penalty decisions).

health, safety, or national security - remain crimes under current law.<sup>16</sup> Additionally, to prevent penalties from becoming obsolete in the face of inflation, the Bill provides that fines will automatically increase by 10% of the minimum penalty amount every three years, unless a specific statute already contains its own revision mechanism.<sup>17</sup> This is a practical and sensible reform, static penalty schedules, common in India's older legislation, lose deterrent value rapidly over time and create perverse incentives for large enterprises to absorb fines as a cost of doing business rather than incentivizing genuine compliance.

#### 4. NEW DELHI-SPECIFIC PROVISIONS

In a somewhat unusual departure from the Bill's general framework, it includes provisions specifically for New Delhi, establishing a Municipal Valuation Committee to determine property tax for buildings and vacant land, while also removing the advertisement tax in the capital.<sup>18</sup> These provisions, though limited in geographic scope, indicate the Bill's awareness that ease of doing business has important sub-national dimensions that national legislation can address only partially.

#### ANALYSIS: THE PRINCIPLE OF PROPORTIONALITY IN REGULATORY LAW

Most fundamentally, the Jan Vishwas Bill 2026 applies proportionality - a well-known idea in constitutional law - to how regulations are enforced. Though seen earlier in cases like *Union of India v. G. Ganayutham*<sup>19</sup>, this legal standard gained clarity later in *Modern Dental College and Research Centre v. State of Madhya Pradesh*.<sup>20</sup> What it requires is straightforward: any government penalty must match the seriousness of the violation. Punishing someone through criminal charges when they made only a clerical mistake goes too far. Heavy penalties such as these bring shame, damage reputation, and risk freedom - outcomes that clearly outweigh minor lapses in documentation. A constitutional aspect tends to fade into the background when policies are debated. Guaranteed by Article 19(1)(g) of India's Constitution, citizens hold the

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<sup>16</sup> See Newsonair, *Lok Sabha Takes Up Jan Vishwas Bill 2026* (Apr. 1, 2026), <https://www.newsonair.gov.in> (reporting that Minister Prasada confirmed major violations and serious offences are not diluted under the Bill).

<sup>17</sup> Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2026 (automatic revision of fines by 10% of minimum amount every three years, subject to Acts with existing revision mechanisms). See also Insights on India, *Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2026* (Apr. 3, 2026), <https://www.insightsonindia.com>.

<sup>18</sup> See Insights on India, *supra* note 17 (describing provisions specific to New Delhi, including a Municipal Valuation Committee and removal of advertisement tax).

<sup>19</sup> *Union of India v. G. Ganayutham*, (1997) 7 SCC 463 (recognizing proportionality as a ground of judicial review of administrative action in India).

<sup>20</sup> *Modern Dental College and Research Centre v. State of Madhya Pradesh*, (2016) 7 SCC 353, ¶¶ 41–58 (elaborating the constitutional doctrine of proportionality under Article 19 of the Constitution of India).

freedom to pursue any profession or run a trade, occupation, or enterprise.<sup>21</sup> Although this liberty allows for reasonable limits under Article 19(6), imposing jail time for minor breaches - those inflicting no clear damage to public interests - tests the boundaries of what counts as fair restraint. Because of how it adjusts punishments, the 2026 Bill edges toward better alignment with constitutional balance, despite steering clear of legal challenges rooted in rights arguments.

The shift from criminal to civil penalties also has a deeper governance implication. Criminal enforcement is episodic, adversarial, and resource-intensive. Civil enforcement through administrative adjudication can be routine, graduated, and corrective. A regulatory system that defaults to civil mechanisms for minor infractions is, in theory, one that can devote its scarce criminal enforcement resources to genuinely serious violations, thereby improving the quality and credibility of enforcement overall.

## **IMPACT ON EASE OF DOING BUSINESS IN INDIA**

### **1. INDIA'S REGULATORY STANDING: THE BROADER CONTEXT**

Over recent years, India has advanced noticeably in shaping how rules affect businesses. Jumping higher on the World Bank's ranking list came mainly through changes that simplified launching companies, settling disputes, and handling bankruptcies.<sup>22</sup> Still, performance in areas such as legal enforcement and building approvals remained weak - problems often tied to treating minor rule breaches as crimes, fuelling unpredictability, limiting trial-and-error growth, pushing capital toward unregistered activity.

### **2. REDUCING COMPLIANCE BURDEN**

One clear effect of the 2026 Bill lies in how it lessens exposure to compliance-related penalties. Because small missteps once led to criminal charges, cautious companies poured effort into paperwork instead of output. Smaller operations feel this pressure more sharply - unlike big firms, they do not have full-time lawyers on staff. With fines now set as measurable civil consequences, handled outside courts, uncertainty drops off noticeably. That shift eases a load

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<sup>21</sup> INDIA CONST. art. 19, cl. (1)(g) (right to practise any profession, or to carry on any occupation, trade, or business).

<sup>22</sup> World Bank Group, *Doing Business 2020: Comparing Business Regulation in 190 Economies* 98–103 (2020) (documenting India's ranking improvements and areas of persistent weakness in the regulatory environment).

that used to tilt unfairly against startups and midsize players.<sup>23</sup> That over fifty million unresolved cases might move toward civil handling highlights how much court time deals with small rule breaches.<sup>24</sup> Shifting these matters could free up space in the system, giving companies relief while also helping courts function better overall.

### **3. INVESTOR CONFIDENCE AND THE PREDICTABILITY PREMIUM**

Investment choices often hinge on how clear the rules appear. When criminal charges enter the picture, outcomes become sudden, extreme, yet uncertain - a kind of danger standard analysis cannot easily measure. Because these risks do not scale gradually, they resist conventional planning methods used before deals close. Shifting certain violations from crime to civil matters changes the landscape: fixed penalty charts emerge, hearings follow known paths, appeals remain possible.<sup>25</sup> With such structure, market participants gain tools to estimate consequences more reliably. Predictable procedures let financiers weigh potential setbacks like any other variable. Clarity, once built, becomes part of the forecast. Uncertainty loses some of its grip when process replaces unpredictability. Should India wish to draw top-tier investment - especially in manufacturing, tech, or pharma - it must offer rules clear enough for global players to follow. Clarity of this kind is exactly what the 2026 Bill begins to provide.

### **4. ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND THE FEAR OF FAILURE**

One overlooked aspect ties into how societies view starting businesses. Studies of new company environments often point to worry about legal trouble as a reason people avoid launching ventures where rules are strict.<sup>26</sup> Facing possible jail time for small paperwork errors shifts how someone weighs taking chances - usually toward caution, not growth. Lowering the threat of criminal penalties for slight breaches in business rules lets the law support real

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<sup>23</sup> See SCC Online Blog, *Decriminalisation of Intellectual Property Laws: The Effects and Defects of the Jan Vishwas Act, 2023* (Aug. 29, 2025), <https://www.sconline.com> (discussing compliance burden on SMEs and MSMEs arising from overcriminalization of regulatory non-compliance).

<sup>24</sup> See International News and Views, *Jan Vishwas Bill 2026 Passed: India Decriminalizes 1,000+ Offenses* (Apr. 3, 2026), <https://internationalnewsandviews.com> (citing official estimates that over 50 million pending cases could benefit from the reform).

<sup>25</sup> See Mondaq/Ahlawat & Associates, *Jan Vishwas Act 2023 Analysis* (Sept. 12, 2023), <https://www.ahlawatassociates.com> (discussing investor confidence implications of converting criminal penalties to predictable civil liabilities with structured adjudication).

<sup>26</sup> See generally Daron Acemoglu & James A. Robinson, *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty* 73–75 (2012) (discussing how institutional constraints, including legal uncertainty, shape entrepreneurial incentives in developing economies).

innovation and enterprise launches, aligning with India's plan to reach a \$5 trillion economy by encouraging homegrown startups.

## POTENTIAL BENEFITS AND CRITICISMS

### 1. THE CASE IN FAVOUR

Backed by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, alongside trade groups and many legal experts, the legislation gains strength. Not facing court over minor breaches means courts handle heavier cases, while enforcement stays fairer, matching what modern economies expect.<sup>27</sup> What stands out is the use of corrective notices - firms get warnings first, penalties later - a sign rules aim for adherence, not retribution. Investors watch such details closely; they show whether systems adapt or stay rigid.

One might question whether such changes truly stand unmatched worldwide, yet the scope remains vast by any measure. Notably, Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal labelled these legal shifts "unprecedented," pointing to their breadth under the 2026 Bill. Few nations have attempted so much within one law.<sup>28</sup> Though debate lingers over comparisons abroad, India's move marks its boldest step in easing criminal penalties at once.

### 2. STRUCTURAL CRITICISMS

Questions about the approach to decriminalizing certain offenses call for careful attention. Not clear is what actually determines which acts get removed from criminal statutes. Behind many choices may lie bureaucratic ease; behind others, pressure from corporate interests - at least according to some observers - instead of a firm measure tied to actual damage caused.<sup>29</sup> Missing is any open rule like "only if someone directly suffers harm" to guide decisions. Without such clarity, changes feel more like isolated judgments than part of a coherent reform.

It worries some public health experts when certain acts are no longer treated as crimes. Changing parts of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act so that making poor-quality medicines leads to fines instead of jail time feels risky - after all, faulty medicine can harm people, not just forms. While clerical slips might deserve leniency, weakening consequences for dangerous

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<sup>27</sup> See generally Daron Acemoglu & James A. Robinson, *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty* 73–75 (2012) (discussing how institutional constraints, including legal uncertainty, shape entrepreneurial incentives in developing economies).

<sup>28</sup> See Organiser, *Jan Vishwas Bill 2026 Passed: Parliament Decriminalises 700+ Offences to Boost Ease of Doing Business* (Apr. 5, 2026), <https://organiser.org>.

<sup>29</sup> See Daily Pioneer, *Jan Vishwas 2026 and the Expanding Drive for Decriminalisation* (Apr. 2026), <https://dailypioneer.com> (critiquing the lack of a transparent, principled framework guiding the selection of provisions for decriminalization).

products seems unwise.<sup>30</sup> Pressure from drug companies behind these changes makes one wonder who benefits most: patients or corporations? What looks like regulatory relief may actually shift risk onto consumers.

Later on, critics pointed out that eliminating Chapter X from the Indian Post Office Act of 1898 weakened safeguards meant to protect citizens, not business concerns. That part once made it a crime to interfere with mail - say, by holding it up or damaging letters. Its deletion was framed as progress, yet some argue it erased rules crucial for everyday people. One outcome: actions harming postal integrity now lack clear legal consequences. Seen this way, reform appears to favour efficiency over accountability.<sup>31</sup>

### **3. IMPLEMENTATION UNCERTAINTY**

Success of the Bill hinges on how it gets put into practice - staffing enforcement roles with skilled personnel, ensuring penalty procedures are open and fair, while building appeal systems people can actually reach. Past experience with similar oversight agencies in India shows inconsistent results. When these decision-making panels lack funding or face political pressure, their effectiveness drops sharply, turning what might have been a meaningful change into just another source of administrative confusion.<sup>32</sup>

### **COMPARATIVE AND GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE**

India's approach through the Jan Vishwas framework has interesting parallels with regulatory reform movements in other jurisdictions, though the scale and context differ.

Although the United Kingdom introduced the Legislative and Regulatory Reform Act in 2006 to streamline regulatory obligations using secondary laws, it embedded a balance between rule intensity and necessity.<sup>33</sup> Instead of blanket mandates, its "Better Regulation" approach insists on showing gains outweigh administrative expenses - something the Jan Vishwas initiative later tries to impose on outdated legal provisions.

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<sup>30</sup> See IMPRI Impact and Policy Research Institute, *supra* note 8 (noting that pharmaceutical industry lobbying resulted in the reclassification of a key penal deterrent on substandard drug manufacturers to a compoundable offence).

<sup>31</sup> *Id.* (citing the deletion of Chapter X of the Indian Post Office Act, 1898, which criminalized acts including opening, detaining, or delaying postal articles, as a potentially unintended consequence of the reform exercise).

<sup>32</sup> See Complinty, *Navigating the Jan Vishwas Amendment Act 2023: A Compliance Guide* (Oct. 9, 2024), <https://complinty.com> (discussing implementation challenges and risks from India's historically uneven performance with quasi-judicial regulatory adjudication).

<sup>33</sup> Legislative and Regulatory Reform Act 2006, c. 51 (UK); see also HM Gov't, *Better Regulation Framework Manual* 7–12 (2015) (establishing proportionality as a core principle of UK regulatory design).

Despite its reputation for streamlined commerce, Singapore keeps small business breaches under civil oversight instead of treating them as crimes, supporting these choices with specialized courts trained in corporate matters.<sup>34</sup> In similar fashion, India now assigns specific officials to judge such cases - yet whether those institutions perform as intended depends less on laws alone and more on execution.

The United States, by contrast, presents a cautionary tale about the limits of decriminalization: the shift toward civil enforcement in financial regulation has been criticised for creating a “too big to jail” dynamic in which sophisticated corporate actors can absorb civil penalties without meaningful behavioural change.<sup>35</sup> India would do well to calibrate its civil penalty schedules carefully, ensuring that penalties are genuinely punitive for large enterprises, and not merely a predictable cost of doing business that large players can budget for while small competitors cannot.

## CONCLUSION

One step at a time, the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2026, marks a shift in how rules take shape across India. While it reaches far, what stands out is not just size but intent behind each change made so far. Because mistakes happen, penalties now consider context instead of assuming guilt first. Seen another way, fairness gets room to grow where strictness once ruled without question. Though many watch closely, early signs suggest a move toward smarter oversight, not heavier control. By removing criminal sanctions from 717 provisions across 79 statutes, establishing structured adjudicatory procedures, and methodically revising the colonial-era punitive foundations of India’s regulatory corpus, the Bill seeks to foster conditions that support entrepreneurial activity, enhance investor confidence, and promote constitutional consistency within the business environment.

Nonetheless, such optimism should be balanced with critical examination. The enduring impact of these reforms will depend less on the quantity of provisions amended and more on the internal coherence of the framework adopted, the effectiveness of its implementation, and the degree of oversight exercised by legislative and judicial bodies to prevent the dilution of accountability for genuinely deleterious conduct through decriminalization. Issues raised concerning public health provisions, the lack of transparency in the selection process, and the

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<sup>34</sup> See generally Tan Cheng Han et al., *Commercial Law in Singapore* 15–17 (4th ed. 2019) (describing Singapore's civil-first enforcement approach for minor commercial regulatory violations).

<sup>35</sup> See Brandon L. Garrett, *Too Big to Jail: How Prosecutors Compromise with Corporations* 1–25 (2014) (arguing that civil enforcement in US financial regulation has failed to deter repeated misconduct by large institutions).

historically inconsistent performance of India's quasi-judicial institutions do not, in themselves, warrant dismissal of the reform, but do necessitate close and continuous scrutiny.

At its core, the Jan Vishwas Bill 2026 articulates a clear policy shift: India's intent to regulate businesses as collaborators in the nation's development, rather than as entities presumed to be offenders subject to imprisonment as a default enforcement tool. Should this legislative intent be effectively transformed into administrative practice, it will mark a notable development in the governance landscape. Yet, it remains the case that effectuating this transition is invariably the more challenging aspect of reform.