

RTI Act amendment won't cut transparency: Minister

Context :- The Digital Personal Data Protection Act (DPDP), 2023, introduces an amendment to the RTI Act, 2005, raising concerns about potential restrictions on access to public information. The government asserts it balances transparency with the **right to privacy under Article 21**.

- **Minister's Assurance:**
 - Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw assured that the **amendment to the RTI Act** (via the Digital Personal Data Protection Act – DPDP) will **not dilute transparency**.
 - He stated the amendment will not be relevant to public interest.
- **Context of the Amendment:**
 - The changes will be enforced once the **DPDP Act Rules are notified**, expected in the coming weeks.
 - Critics say this marks a significant blow to the transparency regime.
- **Opposition & Civil Society Concerns:**
 - Congress leader **Jairam Ramesh** raised alarm over **potential misuse** of the amendment to deny information about **subsidy allocations and welfare schemes**.
 - **Civil society and activists** believe the amendment could **weaken the RTI Act**, especially if it limits access to data involving personal details of citizens or officials.
 - Over **120 Opposition MPs** have signed a letter demanding **repeal of the amendment**.
- **Minister's Legal Justification:**
 - Vaishnaw cited the 2017 Supreme Court judgment declaring the Right to Privacy as a fundamental right under Article 21.
 - He emphasized the need to balance RTI with privacy concerns, ensuring harmonious coexistence of both rights.