

Law to protect journalists

70. SHRIMATI GUNDU SUDHARANI: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Ministry is working on a Bill aimed at protecting journalists from crime against them;

(b) if so, the aims and objectives of the proposed legislation;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the Fast Track Courts would be set up to deal with crime against journalists; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHEED): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) No such proposal is under consideration.

Cases pending in High Courts and Supreme Court

71. SHRIMATI VASANTHI STANLEY: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of cases pending in the various High Courts and the Supreme Court;

(b) the steps taken by Government to reduce the pendency of cases in the country;

(c) whether there is any proposal to set up a National Commission of Justice; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHEED): (a) As per latest available information, 57,179 cases were pending in the Supreme Court of India as on 30.6.11. The number of cases pending in the High Courts were 42,17,903 as on 30.9.2010.

(b) In order to facilitate expeditious disposal of cases in Courts, Government has taken a number of measures as mentioned below:

I. The Government has approved setting up of 'National Mission for Justice Delivery and Legal Reforms'. The major goals are:

- Increasing access by reducing delays and arrears in the system.
- Enhancing accountability through structural changes and by setting performance standards and capacities

A Mission Mode approach to infrastructure development of subordinate judiciary is among the major initiatives under the National Mission for Justice Delivery which is approved by the Government. Inadequacy of infrastructure in subordinate courts has been one of the bottlenecks in the speedy delivery of justice. Keeping this in mind in the financial year 2011-12, the allocation for the Centrally Sponsored Scheme for infrastructure development has been increased fivefold from ` 100 Cr. to ` 500 Cr. Funding pattern has also been increased from 50:50 to 75:25 for the states and to continue 90:10 for the NE states.

II. The Government has accepted the recommendations of the Thirteenth Finance Commission to provide a grant of ` 5000 Cr. to the States for improving the justice delivery system in the country over a five year period 2010-15. A grant of ` 1000 Cr. has already been released to the States during the year 2010-11. With the help of these grants, the States can, *inter-alia*, set up morning/evening/shift/special magistrates' courts, appoint court managers, establish ADR centres and provide training to mediators/conciliators, organise more Lok Adalats to reduce pendencies. The grants also provide for training of judicial officers, strengthening of State Judicial Academies, training of public prosecutors and maintenance of heritage court buildings.

III. In order to computerise the justice delivery system Government is implementing e-Courts Project for the District and Subordinate Courts in the country and upgradation of ICT infrastructure in superior courts at an estimated cost of 935 crore. The target is to computerize 12000 Courts by 31st March, 2012 and 14249 Courts by 31st March, 2014. Court Management and case management can be done through National Arrears Grid created under the project.

IV. The Thirteen Finance Commission while recommending a grant of ` 5000 Cr. made a condition for release of 2nd year installment only after formulating State Litigation policy. State Litigation policy is to be formulated with the aim to transform government into an efficient and responsible litigant. If the cases involving government are reduced then the courts will have time to dispose of a large number of cases to achieve the target of reducing the pendency.

- V. Enactment of the Gram Nyayalayas Act, 2008 which provides for establishment of Gram Nyayalayas to improve access to justice to marginalised. The current year allocation has been increased from ` 40 Cr. to ` 150 Cr. So far 151 Gram Nyayalayas have been notified by the States.
- VI. The Hon'ble Minister of Law and Justice has requested all the Chief Justices of High Courts to launch a campaign to reduce pendency of cases in court from July-December, 2011 and also for filling up vacancies of judges in the High Courts and Subordinate Courts during the same period. Vacancies and delays are inevitably correlated, hence a campaign mode approach for filling vacancies need to be launched. At least 50% of the vacancies could be filled up in respect of subordinate courts by December 2011.
- (c) No, Sir.
- (d) Does not arise.

Regional centres of excellence for advanced legal studies and research

72. SHRIMATI VASANTHI STANLEY: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

- (a) the steps taken by Government to promote legal education;
- (b) whether Government has proposed to set up regional centres of excellence for advanced legal studies and research; and
- (c) how many centres are proposed to be set up and the locations thereof?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHEED): (a) As per the provisions of the Advocates Act, 1961, the Bar Council of India is to promote legal education and to lay down standards of such education in consultation with the Universities in India imparting such education and the State Bar Councils. Under section 49 of the said Act, the Bar Council of India has powers to make rules for discharging its functions under the Act. For promotion of the standards of legal education, the Bar Council has framed rules *i.e.* Bar Council of India Rules, Part IV, Rules on Standards of Legal Education and Recognition of Degrees in Law for the purpose of enrolment as advocates and inspection of Universities for recognizing its degrees in law.

(b) and (c) Yes Sir. This Department has a proposal for establishment of Centres for Advanced Legal Studies and Research. These autonomous Centres for Advanced Legal Studies will