

State Governments under the Constitution of India. However, Government has written to the Chief Justices of the High Courts to constitute Fast Track Courts (FTCs) for speedy trial of the pending rape cases in district/subordinate courts having a high pendency of such cases and to monitor the progress of these cases. The Chief Ministers of States have been requested to provide financial support to the High Courts for setting up FTCs for cases of crime against women. In the Joint Conference of Chief Ministers of States and Chief Justices of the High Courts held on 7th April, 2013, it was decided that the State Governments shall, in consultation with the Chief Justices of the respective High Courts, take necessary steps to establish suitable number of Fast Track Courts for offences against women, children, differently abled persons, senior citizens and marginalized sections of the society and provide adequate funds for the purpose.

As per the reports received from State Governments, 275 special courts have been set up/designated for cases of crime against women.

Legislative provisions have been made by the Government for setting up of special courts for speedy trial of offences against children. Section 25 of the Commissions for Protection of Child Rights Act, 2005 provides that for the purpose of providing speedy trial of offences against children or of violation of child rights, the State Government may, with the concurrence of the Chief Justice of the High Court, by notification, specify at least a court in the State or specify, for each district, a Court of Session to be a Children's Court to try the said offence. Section 28(1) of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 provides that for the purposes of providing a speedy trial, the State Government shall in consultation with the Chief Justice of the High Court, by notification in the Official Gazette, designate for each district, a Court of Session to be a Special Court to try the offences under the Act provided that if a Court of Session is notified as a Children's Court under the Commissions for Protection of Child Rights Act, 2005 or a Special Court designated for similar purposes under any other law for the time being in force, then, such court shall be deemed to be a Special Court under this section.

No time-limit can be fixed for disposal of cases in courts. However, Chief Justices of all High Courts have been requested to invite the attention of the District Judges to the use of provisions under Sections 157, 309 and 327 of the Code of Criminal Procedure with a view to examination of witnesses on a day to day basis, keeping adjournments at a bare minimum and expediting trial of cases involving heinous crimes such as rape.

#### **Witness prosecution system**

3318. DR. CHANDAN MITRA: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that absence of a witness protection system is causing rise in unmerited acquittals in the country;

(b) if so, the reasons for delay in putting in place a strong witness protection system in order to ensure justice to victims; and

(c) the corrective steps taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD):

(a) to (c) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

### Phasing out of old EVMs

3319. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government proposes to phase out old Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs), if so, the details thereof;

(b) the reasons behind this decision; and

(c) the action taken by Election Commission to have new EVMs in place of phased out EVMs?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD):

(a) and (b) Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) have a life span of fifteen years and thus EVMs ageing fifteen years or more are to be replaced after following the due procedure. Following are the details of the EVMs, as provided by the Election Commission, which are procured during the years 2000-05 and are proposed to be phased out during the Financial Years 2015-20:-

| Sl. No. | Financial Year of procurement | No. of EVMs procured | Financial Year in which 15 years lifespan completes and disposal is proposed |
|---------|-------------------------------|----------------------|--|
| 1.      | 2000-01                       | 142631               | 2015-16  |
| 2.      | 2001-02                       | 135481               | 2016-17  |
| 3.      | 2002-03                       | 190592               | 2017-18  |
| 4.      | 2003-04                       | 336045               | 2018-19  |
| 5.      | 2004-05                       | 125681               | 2019-20  |

(c) The Election Commission has sent a proposal to the Government which *inter alia* includes the proposal for procurement of Control Units and Ballot Units which is being examined. The details of the proposed procurement by the Election Commission are as under:-