

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE
(DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE)
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO-2189
ANSWERED ON – 21/12/2023

EFFORTS TO PROMOTE DIGITISATION OF LEGAL SYSTEM AND E-COURTS

2189. DR. SIKANDER KUMAR:

Will the Minister of *Law and Justice* be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of the Ministry's efforts in promoting the digitisation of legal procedures and the creation of e-courts; and
- (b) the details of the notable achievements regarding efficiency and transparency in the legal system?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE; MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS; AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE

(SHRI ARJUN RAM MEGHWAL)

(a) and (b): As part of the National eGovernance Plan, the eCourts Mission Mode Project is under implementation since 2007 for Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) development of the Indian Judiciary based on the "National Policy and Action Plan for Implementation of Information and Communication Technology in the Indian Judiciary". eCourts project is being implemented in association with eCommittee, Supreme Court of India and Department of Justice.

Phase I of the eCourts Mission Mode Project focused on the basics of computerisation like setting up computer hardware, ensuring internet connectivity, and operationalizing the e-Courts platform. Against the financial outlay of Rs.935 crore, total expenditure incurred was Rs.639.41 crore for implementation of this phase.

Following initiatives were undertaken in this phase:

- i. 14,249 District and Subordinate courts were computerized

- ii. LAN was installed at 13,683 courts, hardware provided in 13,436 courts and software was installed in 13,672 courts.
- iii. Laptops were provided to 14,309 judicial officers and change management exercise completed in all High Courts.
- iv. Over 14,000 Judicial Officers were trained in the use of UBUNTU-Linux Operating System.
- v. More than 3900 court staff were trained in Case Information System (CIS) as System Administrators.
- vi. Video Conferencing facility was operationalised between 493 court complexes & 347 corresponding jails.

Phase II of the eCourts Mission Mode Project extended from 2015-2023, focused on ICT enablement of District & Subordinate Courts and various citizen centric initiatives. Against the financial outlay of Rs.1670 crores, total expenditure incurred was Rs. 1668.43 crore for implementation of this phase. Till 2023, digital infrastructure has been provided to 18,735 courts, State-wise details are placed at Annexure-I

The following e-initiatives have been undertaken by the Government to make justice accessible and available for all stakeholders through digitization of legal procedures, thereby enhancing efficiency and transparency in the legal system: -

- i. Under the Wide Area Network (WAN) Project, connectivity has been provided to 99.4% (2977 out of earmarked 2992) of total Court Complexes across India with 10 Mbps to 100 Mbps bandwidth speed.
- ii. National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG) is a database of orders, judgments, and cases, created as an online platform under the eCourts Project. It provides information relating to judicial proceedings/decisions of all computerized district and subordinate courts of the country. Litigants can access case status information in respect of over 24.47 crore cases and more than 24.13 crore orders / judgments (as on 01.12.2023).
- iii. Case Information Software (CIS) based on customized Free and Open-Source Software (FOSS) has been developed. Currently CIS National Core Version 3.2 is being implemented in District Courts and the CIS National Core Version 1.0 is being implemented for the High Courts.
- iv. As part of eCourts project, 7 platforms have been created to provide real time information on case status, cause lists, judgements etc. to lawyers/Litigants through

SMS Push and Pull (2,00,000 SMS sent daily), Email (2,50,000 sent daily), multilingual and tactile eCourts services Portal (35 lakh hits daily), JSC (Judicial Service centres) and Info Kiosks. In addition, Electronic Case Management Tools (ECMT) have been created with Mobile App for lawyers (total 2.07 crore downloads till 31.10.2023) and JustIS app for judges (19,433 downloads till 30.11.2023).

- v. India has emerged as a global leader in conducting court hearing through Video Conferencing. The District & Subordinate courts heard 2,11,52,949 cases while the High Courts heard 80,91,400 cases (totalling 2.92 crore) till 31.10.2023 using video conferencing system. The Hon'ble Supreme Court of India held 4,82,941 hearings through video conferencing till 15.05.2023.
- vi. Live Streaming of court proceedings has been started in High Courts of Gujarat, Gauhati, Orissa, Karnataka, Jharkhand, Patna, Madhya Pradesh & Constitutional Bench of Hon'ble Supreme Court of India thus allowing media and other interested persons to join the proceedings.
- vii. 25 Virtual Courts in 20 States/UTs have been operationalized to handle traffic challan cases. More than 4.11 crore cases have been handled by 25 virtual courts and in more than 45 lakhs (45,92,871) cases online fine of more than Rs. 478.69 crore has been realized till 30.11.2023.
- viii. New e-filing system (version 3.0) has been rolled out for the electronic filing of legal papers with upgraded features. Draft eFiling rules have been formulated and circulated to the High Courts for adoption. A total of 20 High Courts have adopted the model rules of e-Filing as on 31.10.2023.
- ix. e-Filing of cases requires the option for electronic payment of fees which includes court fees, fines and penalties which are directly payable to the Consolidated Fund. A total of 21 High Courts have implemented e-payments in their respective jurisdictions. The Court Fees Act has been amended in 23 High Courts till 31.10.2023.
- x. To bridge the digital divide, 875 eSewa Kendras have been rolled out with the intention of facilitating the lawyer or litigant who needs any kind of assistance ranging from information to facilitation and eFiling. It also assists the litigants in accessing online eCourts services and acts as a saviour for those who cannot afford the technology or are located in far-flung areas. It also aids to addresses the challenges caused by illiteracy among citizens at large. It will provide benefits in saving time, avoidance of exertion, travelling long distances, and saving cost by offering facilities of e-filing of cases across the country, to conduct the hearing virtually, scanning, accessing e-Courts services etc.

- xi. A new “Judgment Search” portal has been started with features such as search by Bench, Case Type, Case Number, Year, Petitioner/ Respondent Name, Judge Name, Act, Section, Decision: From Date, To Date and Full Text Search. This facility is being provided free of cost to all.
- xii. To make effective use of database created through National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG) and to make the information available to public, LED Display Message Sign Board System called “Justice Clock” have been installed. The purpose of Justice Clock is to bring awareness to the public about the Justice Sector. A total of 39 Justice Clocks in 25 High Courts have been installed. A Virtual Justice Clock is also hosted online.

A sub-committee had been constituted by eCommittee, Supreme Court of India for preparing a Digital Preservation Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for scanning, storage, retrieval, digitization of court records and preservation of legacy data of the judiciary. The SOPs as well as the Detailed Project Report (DPR) for eCourts Phase-III was approved by the eCommittee, Supreme Court of India on 21.10.2022. Till the end of Phase-II, as per the Digital Preservation Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), 73.45 crore pages of court records in various High Courts were digitized. High Court wise details of digitization are enclosed at Annexure II.

As eCourts Phase II is over, the Union Cabinet on 13.09.2023 approved eCourts Phase-III with a budgetary outlay of Rs.7,210 crore. Taking the gains of Phase-I and Phase-II to the next level, the e-Courts Phase-III aims to usher in a regime of maximum ease of justice by moving towards digital, online and paperless courts. The main objective of the Phase-III is to create a unified technology platform for the judiciary, which will provide a seamless and paperless interface between the courts, the litigants and other stakeholders. The proposed timeframe for the eCourts Project Phase-III is four years starting from 2023 onwards. Under Phase III, there are 24 components that includes digitisation of 3108 crore pages, both legacy records and pending cases at a budgetary outlay of Rs. 2038.40 crore and provision of ICT infrastructure in 2500 newly set up Courts and 400 new Court Complexes at a budgetary outlay of Rs. 426.25 crore.

Annexure-I

Statement referred to in reply of Rajya Sabha Unstarred Question No. 2189 for 21/12/2023 regarding efforts to promote digitisation of legal system and e-courts. The State-wise details of operational eCourts in the country is as under:

S.No	High Court	State	Court Complexes	Courts
1	Allahabad	Uttar Pradesh	180	2222
2	Andhra Pradesh	Andhra Pradesh	218	617
3	Bombay	Dadra and Nagar Haveli	1	3
		Daman and Diu	2	2
		Goa	17	39
		Maharashtra	471	2157
4	Calcutta	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	4	14
		West Bengal	89	827
5	Chhattisgarh	Chhattisgarh	93	434
6	Delhi	Delhi	6	681
7	Gauhati	Arunachal Pradesh	14	28
		Assam	74	408
		Mizoram	8	69
		Nagaland	11	37
8	Gujarat	Gujarat	376	1268
9	Himachal Pradesh	Himachal Pradesh	50	162
10	Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh	Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir and Union Territory of Ladakh	86	218
11	Jharkhand	Jharkhand	28	447
12	Karnataka	Karnataka	207	1031
13	Kerala	Kerala	158	484
		Lakshadweep	1	3
14	Madhya Pradesh	Madhya Pradesh	213	1363
15	Madras	Puducherry	4	24
		Tamil Nadu	263	1124
16	Manipur	Manipur	17	38
17	Meghalaya	Meghalaya	7	42
18	Orissa	Odisha	185	686
19	Patna	Bihar	84	1142
20	Punjab & Haryana	Chandigarh	1	30
		Haryana	53	500
		Punjab	64	541
21	Rajasthan	Rajasthan	247	1240
22	Sikkim	Sikkim	8	23
23	Telangana	Telangana	129	476
24	Tripura	Tripura	14	84
25	Uttarakhand	Uttarakhand	69	271
	Total		3452	18735

ANNEXURE II

Statement referred to in reply of Rajya Sabha Unstarred Question No. 2189 for 21/12/2023 regarding efforts to promote digitisation of legal system and e-courts. The progress of digitization of court records is as under:

High Court wise Status of Current Digitization		
Sr. No.	High Court Location	Total Number of Digitized pages
1	Calcutta High Court West Bengal	1,22,00,000
2	Allahabad High Court	19,68, 00,000
3	Delhi High Court, New Delhi	17,90,00,000
4	Andhra Pradesh High Court	Not Available
5	Guwahati High Court, Assam	2,92,17,338
6	High Court of Himachal Pradesh	75,34,000
7	Gauhati High Court Kohima Bench	2,80,000
8	Gauhati High Court Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh	0
9	Chhattisgarh High Court	Not Available
10	Gujarat High Court	Not Available
11	High Court of Madhya Pradesh, Jabalpur	15,40,00,000
12	High Court Meghalaya Shillong	0
13	Gauhati High Court, Aizwal Bench, Mizoram	29,867
14	Orissa High Court, Cuttack, Odisha	1,22,00,000
15	High Court of Sikkim, Gangtok	6,83,861
16	Madras High Court, Chennai	50,98,000
17	High Court of Telangana, Hyderabad	4,01,50,753
18	High Court of Uttarakhand, Nainital	1,32,00,000
19	Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh High Court	Not Available
20	Bombay High Court	0
21	Daman Diu High Court	0
22	High Court Jharkhand, Ranchi	5,50,00,000
23	High Court of Karnataka	1,13,22,389
24	Manipur High Court	16,40,855
25	Rajasthan High Court	1,61,00,000
	Total	73,44,57,063