

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF LAW & JUSTICE
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE**

**RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1870**

ANSWERED ON 22/12/2022

LACK OF DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE

1870. SHRI S NIRANJAN REDDY:

Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government is aware that a survey conducted in 2021 by the Chief Justice of India (CJI) office showed that only 41 percent of the district courts had a studio-based video conferencing facility and only 14 per cent of district court complexes had video linkages with medical officers and 38 per cent had video linkages with jails;
- (b) whether Government has taken any steps to improve this situation; and
- (c) details of steps being taken by Government to improve the digital infrastructure of subordinate judiciary and for installation of fiber optic wires for high speed internet connectivity?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE

(SHRI KIREN RIJJU)

(a) & (b): Yes, Sir. The Registry of Supreme Court of India has compiled data on the status of judicial infrastructure and court amenities, as per which 41 percent of the district courts had a studio-based video conferencing facility and only 14 per cent of district court complexes had video linkages with medical officers and 38 per cent had video linkages with jails.

One video conferencing equipment each has been provided to all Court Complexes including Taluk Level Court Complexes in rural areas under the Phase II of the e-Courts Project for virtual hearings. To further augment the Video Conferencing (VC) infrastructure, the eCommittee of the Supreme Court has approved VC equipment to be provided to 14,443 court rooms in these court complexes for which funds to the tune of Rs.28.88 crore has been released (Details at *Annexure-I*). A sum of Rs. 5.012 crore has also been released for setting

up of 2506 VC Cabin in the Court Complexes besides releasing a sum of Rs. 7.60 crore to install Document Visualisers. VC facilities have been enabled between 3240 court complexes and corresponding 1272 jails. With the help of the VC infrastructure so made available, the District and Subordinate courts conducted 1,65,20,791 virtual hearings since the beginning of the Covid lockdown period till 31.10.2022. Detailed Project Report (DPR) for phase III of eCourts project has been approved by eCommittee of the Supreme Court of India which has provision for the virtual hearing facility for medical officers too. In addition to it, phase III also includes integration with ICJS making seamless connectivity with prisons, forensics etc.

(c): Towards enhancement of ICT enablement of Courts, following initiatives have been taken under eCourts project by the eCommittee of the Supreme Court and the Department of Justice:

- i. A total of 18,735 District and Subordinate courts have been digitised under the eCourts Project Phase II so far.
- ii. Under the Wide Area Network (WAN) Project, 2976 courts sites have been commissioned with 10 Mbps to 100 Mbps bandwidth speed.
- iii. Case Information Software (CIS) which forms the basis for the e-Court services is based on customized Free and Open-Source Software (FOSS) which has been developed by NIC. 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. A new software patch and user manual for COVID-19 management has also been developed to help in smart scheduling of cases.
- v. 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 21.74 crore cases and more than 19.80 crore orders / judgments pertaining to these computerized district and subordinate courts (as on 01.12.2022). Open Application Programming Interface (APIs) have been introduced in 2020 to allow Central and State Governments and institutional litigants including local bodies to access NJDG data to improve pendency monitoring and compliance.

- vi. 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 1.50 Cr. downloads till 31st October 2022) and JustIS app for judges (17,709 downloads till 30th November 2022). JustIS mobile app is now available in iOS as well.
- vii. 21 Virtual Courts in 17 States/UTs have been operationalized to handle traffic challan cases. More than 2.30 crore cases have been handled by 21 virtual courts and in more than 31 lakhs cases, online fine of more than Rs. 337 crore has been realised till 01.12.2022.
- viii. Since the beginning of lockdown period, the Supreme Court of India conducted 2,97,435 hearings, the High Courts 75,80,347 hearings and District & Subordinate Courts 1,65,20,791 hearings, totaling 2.41 crore virtual hearings till 31.10.2022 making India a global leader in virtual hearings. Funds for VC equipment for 14,443 courtrooms have also been released. 1500 VC licenses have been procured to promote virtual hearings. A sum of Rs. 7.60 crore has been released for procurement of 1732 Document Visualizers.
- ix. 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.
- x. 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. The Court Fees Act has been amended in 22 High Courts till 31.10.2022.
- xi. Government has released Rs. 12.54 crore for setting up eSewaKendras. As on 28.02.2022, 619 eSewa Kendras have been made functional in District Courts under 25 High Courts.
- xii. National Service and Tracking of Electronic Processes (NSTEP) has been launched for technology enabled process serving and issuing of summons. It has currently been implemented in 28 States/ UTs.
- xiii. 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.

- xiv. To make effective use of database created through National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG) and to make the information available to public, 38 LED Display Message Sign Board System called Justice Clocks, have been installed in 24 High Courts.
- xv. Towards creating widespread awareness and familiarization of eFiling and eCourts services and to address “skill divide”, a manual on eFiling and a Brochure on “How to register for eFiling” has been made available in English, Hindi and 12 regional languages for the use of the lawyers. A YouTube channel has been created in the name of the eCourt services with video tutorials on eFiling. The eCommittee of the Supreme Court of India has conducted trainings and awareness programmes on the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) services. These programmes have covered nearly 5,13,080 stakeholders, including High Court Judges, Judges of the District Judiciary, Court Staff, Master Trainers among Judges/District System Administrator, Technical Staff of High Courts, and Advocates.

The Wide Area Network (WAN) Project under eCourts project is aimed at connecting all District and Subordinate court complexes, spread across the country using various technologies like Optical Fibre Cable (OFC), Radio Frequency (RF), Very Small Aperture Terminal (VSAT) etc. So far, 99.4% sites have been connected with 10 Mbps to 100 Mbps bandwidth speed.

ANNEXURE-I**STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (C) & (D) OF RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1870 FOR ANSWER ON 22ND DECEMBER, 2022.****FUND RELEASE FOR VC EQUIPMENT FOR COURT ROOMS**

S.No	High Court	Number of Functioning Court Rooms	Number of VC equipment were already provided	Number of additional equipment to be provided	Total Estimated Cost (In Rs. Lakh)
A	B	C	D	E	F=Ex20000
1	Allahabad	2438	150	2288	457.6
2	Andhra Pradesh	550	212	338	67.6
3	Bombay	2178	486	1692	338.4
4	Calcutta	840	88	752	150.4
5	Chhattisgarh	395	90	305	61
6	Delhi	479	6	473	94.6
7	Gauhati	442	194	248	49.6
8	Gujarat	1078	327	751	150.2
9	Himachal Pradesh	135	43	92	18.4
10	Jammu & Kashmir	218	86	132	26.4
11	Jharkhand	417	28	389	77.8
12	Karnataka	1029	200	829	165.8
13	Kerala	508	159	349	69.8
14	Madhya Pradesh	1274	203	1071	214.2
15	Madras	1169	267	902	180.4
16	Manipur	38	37	1	0.2
17	Meghalaya	36	64	0	0
18	Orissa	688	141	547	109.4
19	Patna	1046	76	970	194
20	Punjab & Haryana	972	118	854	170.8
21	Rajasthan	1239	238	1001	200.2
22	Sikkim	21	17	4	0.8
23	Telangana	440	129	311	62.2
24	Tripura	78	66	12	2.4
25	Uttarakhand	184	52	132	26.4
	Total	17892	3477	14443	2888.6
