

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE
(DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE)**

**RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 1885
ANSWERED ON - 16/03/2023**

e-Courts project for online hearing

1885. Shri Vaiko:

Shri M. Shanmugam:

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

- (a) the status of e-courts project in various High Courts and other Subordinate Courts in the country;
- (b) the amount allotted for the infrastructure development of e-courts during the last three years, year-wise and State-wise;
- (c) the number of Courts which have started online court hearings, having virtual appearance of lawyers and clients, the details thereof;
- (d) whether any training programmes were organised for Chief Justices and High Court Judges to familiarize them with the technology for conducting online hearings; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE

(SHRI KIREN RIJJU)

(a) :The Government has launched the eCourts Integrated Mission Mode Project in the country for computerization of District and subordinate courts with the objective of improving access to justice using technology. As part of the National eGovernance Plan, the project is under implementation since 2007 for 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 e-Committee Supreme Court of India and Department of Justice. Phase I of the project was implemented during 2011-2015. Phase II of the project started in 2015 under which 18,735 District & Subordinate courts have been computerised so far.

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. Under the Wide Area Network (WAN) Project, 2976 court sites have been commissioned with 10 Mbps to 100 Mbps bandwidth speed.
- ii. 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.
- iii. 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 22.38 crore cases and more than 20.83 crore orders / judgments (as on 01.03.2023). Open 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.
- 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 1.64 cr. downloads till 31st January 2023) and JustIS app for judges (18,407 downloads till 31st December 2022). JustIS mobile app is now available in iOS as well.
- v. 21 Virtual Courts in 17 States/UTs have been operationalized to handle traffic challan cases. More than 2.40 crore cases have been handled by 21 virtual courts and in more than 33 lakhs (33,57,972) cases online fine of more than Rs. 359.34 crore has been realised till 31.01.2023.
- vi. The Supreme Court of India emerged as a global leader by conducting 4,02,937 hearings (till 31.01.2023 since the beginning of lockdown period). The High Courts (77,67,596 cases and Subordinate Courts 1,84,95,235 cases) have

conducted 2.63 crore virtual hearings till 24.12.2022. VC facilities have also been enabled between 3240 court complexes and corresponding 1272 jails. Funds for 2506 VC cabins and 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.

- vii. 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 19 High Courts have adopted the model rules of e-Filing as on 31.01.2023. Additionally, under the jurisdiction of 25 High Courts, 19 District Courts have adopted the model rules of e-Filing as on 31.01.2023
- viii. 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 20 High Courts have implemented ePayments in their respective jurisdictions. The Court Fees Act has been amended in 21 High Courts till 31.12.2022.
- ix. 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.
- x. 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.
- xi. To make effective use of database created through National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG) and to make the information available to public 39 LED Display Message Sign Board System called Justice Clocks, have been installed in 25 High Courts.
- xii. 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 11 regional languages for the use of the lawyers. A YouTube channel has been created in the name of the e Court services with video tutorials on eFiling. The eCommittee of the Supreme Court of India has conducted trainings and awareness programmes on the 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/DSA, Technical Staff of High Courts, and Advocates.

The phase II of the project is nearing its completion and Detailed Project Report (DPR) for e-Courts Phase III has been finalized and approved by eCommittee, Supreme Court of India on 21st October 2022. The meeting of the Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC) Meeting was held on 23.02.2023. Other, requisite approvals of eCourts Project Phase-III are at advance stage. Phase III of the project envisions facilitation of various new features, few of which are the digital initiatives that encompass Digital and Paperless Courts that aim to bring court proceedings under a digital format in a court; Online Court that focus on eliminating the presence of litigants or lawyers in the court through exploration and adoption of different forms of digitally enabled hearings; expansion of scope of Virtual Courts beyond adjudication of Traffic Violations ; use of emerging technologies like Artificial Intelligence and its subsets like Optical Character Recognition (OCR) etc for analysis of case pendency, forecasting future litigation, etc.

(b) : Funds released during the last three years for infrastructure development of e-Courts are given in Annexure-I.

(c) : The details of courts where virtual hearing is taking place is given in Annexure-II.

(d) : Yes Sir, training programmes were organised for Judges of High Court to familiarize them with the technology for conducting online hearings.

(e) : The details of the academic programmes that were conducted by the National Judicial Academy on e-Courts / e-Committee for High Court Judges are given below:

S/N	Prog. No.	Programme Name	Prog. Date	No. of Participants
1	P-1276	Workshop for High Court Justices on ICT enablement of Indian Judiciary through E-Courts Project and the evolving concept of Artificial Intelligence	08 & 09/01/2022	24
2	P-1300	Master Trainer Programme for High Court Judges (e-	21/08/2022	25

		committee)		
3	P-1313	e-committee National Conference (e-committee)	06/11/2022	31
4	P-1334	Ecourts Introductory Programme & Computer Skills Enhancement Programme - Level I & II (e-committee)	05/03/2023	31

In addition to the above exclusive programmes on e-Courts, two sessions are fully dedicated on e-Courts in each of the Regional Conferences being organized by the National Judicial Academy for the current academic year 2022-23. During the current academic year i.e; 2022-23, NJA has scheduled 8 Regional Conferences, of which, 5 programmes have been conducted so far in which the total number of participants was 625 (which includes High Court Justices and Judicial Officers).

Annexure-I

Statement referred to in reply of Rajya Sabha Question No.1885 for 16/03/2023 regarding e-Courts project for online hearing. The funds released during the last three years for infrastructure development are:

S.No.	High Courts	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
1	Allahabad	15.04	13.79	0.00
2	Andhra Pradesh	0.00	1.96	0.00
3	Bombay	0.00	8.86	0.00
4	Calcutta	0.00	4.93	0.00
5	Chhattisgarh	4.44	2.34	0.00
6	Delhi	0.00	3.00	0.00
7 (a)	Gauhati (Arunachal Pradesh)	0.98	1.52	1.26
7 (b)	Gauhati (Assam)	13.68	6.11	3.49
7 (c)	Gauhati (Mizoram)	0.51	0.72	0.30
7 (d)	Gauhati (Nagaland)	0.70	0.83	0.84
8	Gujarat*	0.00	3.48	0.00
9	Himachal Pradesh	0.00	2.00	0.00
10	Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh	0.00	1.00	0.00
11	Jharkhand	5.53	2.98	0.00
12	Karnataka	9.15	4.29	0.00
13	Kerala	0.00	2.83	1.58
14	Madhya Pradesh	11.21	6.28	0.00
15	Madras	0.00	4.73	0.00
16	Manipur	0.61	1.30	0.76
17	Meghalaya	0.92	2.32	2.23
18	Orissa	13.46	3.37	0.00
19	Patna	7.08	5.44	0.00
20	Punjab & Haryana	0.00	4.55	0.00
21	Rajasthan	1.29	10.58	1.62
22	Sikkim	1.61	1.01	0.77
23	Telangana	0.00	1.79	0.00
24	Tripura	2.24	4.44	0.95
25	Uttarakhand	0.00	1.28	0.00
Total		88.44	107.74	13.80

*Gujarat High Court surrendered Rs.13.12 Cr. Total utilization included surrendered funds.

Annexure-II

Statement referred to in reply of Rajya Sabha Question No.1885 for 16/03/2023 regarding e-Courts project for online hearing. Details of courts where virtual hearing is taking place along with details of cases heard through virtual hearings as on 31 January 2023 are:

Details of courts where virtual hearing is taking place along with details of cases heard through virtual hearings as on 31 January 2023

S. No.	High Court	No. of hearings in High Courts	No. of hearings in District Courts	Total Hearings
1	Allahabad	241390	4114257	4355647
2	Andhra Pradesh	380252	1412770	1793022
3	Bombay	38305	80818	119123
4	Calcutta	139053	81940	220993
5	Chhattisgarh	103097	43160	146257
6	Delhi	317729	4502342	4820071
7	Gauhati – Arunachal Pradesh	2292	8128	10420
8	Gauhati – Assam	266160	333777	599937
9	Gauhati – Mizoram	3963	13268	17231
10	Gauhati - Nagaland	930	650	1580
11	Gujarat	388929	192808	581737
12	Himachal Pradesh	183904	100200	284104
13	Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh	257708	458532	716240
14	Jharkhand	218343	641727	860070
15	Karnataka	1170814	123066	1293880
16	Kerala	160411	541229	701640
17	Madhya Pradesh	668369	782248	1450617
18	Madras	1424427	347900	1772327
19	Manipur	38695	15288	53983
20	Meghalaya	2859	27554	30413
21	Orissa	288674	247949	536623
22	Patna	275754	2116523	2392277

23	Punjab & Haryana	581047	1873547	2454594
24	Rajasthan	229688	179006	408694
25	Sikkim	482	12227	12709
26	Telangana	299031	190327	489358
27	Tripura	10585	12564	23149
28	Uttarakhand	74705	41430	116135
Total		7767596	18495235	26262831