

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

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 4833
TO BE ANSWERED ON FRIDAY, THE 01st APRIL, 2022**

Virtual Courts

†4833. SHRI GANESH SINGH:

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

- (a) whether the Government has received any suggestion for continuation of the practice of virtual courts through the video conferencing mode that was started during the lockdown times;
- (b) if so, whether the present infrastructure is not adequate for functioning of courts through virtual mode, if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether nearly 50 percent lawyers particularly in the district courts lack laptops and computer facilities, if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether the Government has taken note of the complaints made by the people regarding repeated crashing of system and occurrence of technical errors while logging into the system affecting the smooth running of the proceedings; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof?

**ANSWER
MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE
(SHRI KIREN RIJJU)**

(a) to (c): The decision to follow the virtual mode of court hearing is a matter which falls strictly under the purview of the judiciary and the Central Government has no role to play in this matter. Since Covid lockdown started, the District Courts heard 1,23,19,917 cases while the High Courts heard

61,02,859 cases (totalling 1.84 cr) till 28.02.2022 using Video-Conferencing (VC). The Supreme Court held 2,18,891 hearings till 14.03.2022 since the beginning of lockdown period making it the world leader in virtual hearings. To bring about uniformity and standardization in the conduct of VC, an overarching order was passed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India on 6th April 2020 which gave legal sanctity and validity to the court hearings done through VC. Further, VC rules were framed by a 5-judge committee which was circulated to all the High Courts for adoption after local contextualization. 24 High Courts have implemented Video Conferencing rules. One video conference equipment each has been provided to all Court Complexes including taluk level courts and additionally funds have been sanctioned for additional VC equipment for 14,443 court rooms. Funds for setting up 2506 VC Cabins have been made available. Additional 1500 VC Licenses have been acquired. VC facilities are already enabled between 3240 court complexes and corresponding 1272 jails. A sum of Rs. 7.60 crore has been released for procurement of 1732 Document Visualizers. Lack of access to computers, laptops and digital hardware amongst lawyers in rural areas and resultant digital divide is a genuine problem. To overcome this problem of digital divide, 493 number of eSewa Kendras have been setup in High Courts and district courts across the country which give lawyers easy access to eCourt facilities and internet facility.

(d) &(e): To resolve technical glitches which arise during VC hearings, NIC has been closely monitoring the complaints. NIC has developed a VC software which is under test phase. MeitY (Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology) has also undertaken an exercise to develop indigenous VC software. Regular coordination meetings are held with BSNL to resolve issues regarding connectivity. Also, a portal to lodge complaints regarding connectivity & bandwidth related issues has been developed for monitoring and faster resolution of such complaints.
