

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

LOK SABHA

**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 4725
TO BE ANSWERED ON FRIDAY, THE 28TH MARCH, 2025**

JUDICIAL REFORMS

4725. DR. ANAND KUMAR:

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

(a) whether the Government has introduced any reforms to reduce the pendency of cases in the courts across the country and if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether there are plans to set up fast-track courts for cases related to women's safety and cybercrime in Uttar Pradesh, particularly in Bahraich and if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government is considering increasing the use of technology to improve judicial efficiency and transparency and if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether any measures are being taken to provide free legal aid to marginalized communities and ensure easy access to justice; and

(e) if so, the details thereof along with the number of people provided free legal aid in the country in the last three years?

ANSWER

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

(SHRI ARJUN RAM MEGHWAL)

(a): Disposal of pending cases in a time bound manner is within the domain of the judiciary. However, the Central Government has unwavering commitment

towards speedy disposal of cases and reducing pendency as mandated under Article 21 of the Constitution. To this end, the Government has undertaken several initiatives to create an ecosystem that facilitates the faster disposal of cases by the judiciary. Some of these initiatives are as follows:

- i. **National Mission for Justice Delivery and Legal Reforms:** The National Mission for Justice Delivery and Legal Reforms was set up in August, 2011 with the twin objectives of increasing access by reducing delays and arrears in the system and enhancing accountability through structural changes and by setting performance standards and capacities. The Mission has been pursuing a coordinated approach for phased liquidation of arrears and pendency in judicial administration, which, inter-alia, involves better infrastructure for courts including computerization, increase in sanctioned strength of District and Subordinate Courts, policy and legislative measures in the areas prone to excessive litigation and re-engineering of court procedure for quick disposal of cases and emphasis on human resource development.
- ii. **Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) for Development of Infrastructure Facilities for Judiciary:** Under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme for development of Judicial Infrastructure, funds are being released to States/UTs for construction of court halls, residential quarters for judicial officers, lawyers' halls, toilet complexes and digital computer rooms that ease the life of various stakeholders including the litigants, thereby aiding justice delivery. As on date, Rs. 11886.29 crores have been released since the inception of the Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) for Development of Infrastructure Facilities for the Judiciary in 1993-94. The number of court halls has increased from 15,818 as on 30.06.2014 to 22,062 as on 28.02.2025, and the number of residential units has increased from 10,211 as on 30.06.2014 to 19,775 as on 28.02.2025, under this scheme.

- iii. **Judicial Appointments:** The Government has been regularly filling up vacancies of Judges in the Supreme Court of India and the High Courts. From 01.05.2014 to 06.03.2025, 66 Judges were appointed in the Supreme Court. 1024 new Judges were appointed and 788 Additional Judges were made permanent in the High Courts during the same period. The sanctioned strength of Judges of the High Courts has been increased from 906 in May, 2014 to 1122 till now. The sanctioned and working strength of judicial officers in District and Subordinate Courts has increased as under:

As on	Sanctioned Strength	Working Strength
31.12.2013	19,518	15,115
28.02.2025	25,786	20,511

Source: MIS Portal of the Department of Justice

However, filling up of vacancies in District and Subordinate judiciary falls within the domain of the State Governments and High Courts concerned.

- iv. **Arrears Committees:** In pursuance of a Resolution passed in Chief Justices' Conference held in April, 2015, Arrears Committees have been set up in all 25 High Courts to clear cases pending for more than five years. Arrears Committees have been set up under District Courts as well.
- v. **Legislative Amendments:** With a view to reduce pendency and unclogging of the courts, the Government has amended various laws like the Negotiable Instruments (Amendment) Act, 2018, the Commercial Courts (Amendment) Act, 2018, the Specific Relief (Amendment) Act, 2018, the Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Act, 2019 and the Criminal Laws (Amendment) Act, 2018.
- vi. **Promotion of Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR):** Alternate Dispute Resolution methods have been promoted whole heartedly. Accordingly,

the Commercial Courts Act, 2015 was amended in August, 2018 making Pre-institution Mediation and Settlement (PIMS) mandatory in case of commercial disputes. Amendment to the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996 has been made by the Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Act 2015 for expediting the speedy resolution of disputes by prescribing timelines.

Under the Commercial Courts Act, 2015, there is provision for case management hearing which provides for an efficient, effective and purposeful judicial management of a case so as to achieve a timely and qualitative resolution of a dispute. It assists in early identification of disputed issues of fact and law, establishment of procedural calendar for the life of the case and the exploration of possibilities of the resolution of the dispute.

Another novel feature introduced for the commercial courts is the system of color banding which limits the number of adjournments that can be granted in any commercial matter to three and alerts the judges about listing of the cases in accordance with their stage of pendency.

(b): Establishment of subordinate Courts, including Fast Track Courts for cyber-crime and women's safety, lies within the domain of the State/UT Governments who set up such courts as per their needs and resources, in consultation with their respective High Courts.

The 14th Finance Commission had recommended for setting up of 1800 Fast Track Courts (FTCs) during 2015-2020 for speedy trial of specific cases of heinous nature, civil cases related to women, children, senior citizen, disabled persons, persons infected with terminal ailments etc. and property related cases pending for more than 5 years. The Finance Commission had further urged the State Governments to utilize enhanced fiscal space available through tax devolution for this purpose. The Union Government has also

urged the State Governments to allocate funds for the setting up of FTCs, from the financial year 2015-16 onward. As per information made available by High Courts, 860 FTCs are functional in the country as on 31.01.2025. In the State of Uttar Pradesh, there are 373 FTCs functional in the State as on 31.01.2025.

Further, in pursuance to the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2018, the Central Government is implementing a Centrally Sponsored Scheme for setting up Fast Track Special Courts (FTSCs) including exclusive POCSO (e-POCSO) courts since October, 2019 for expeditious trial and disposal of pending cases pertaining to Rape and Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act in a time-bound manner. As per the data submitted by the High Courts, 745 FTSCs including 404 exclusive POCSO (e-POCSO) courts are functional in 30 States/UTs, as on 31.01.2025. These courts have disposed of more than 3,06,000 cases since the inception of the Scheme while more than 2,03,000 cases are pending. In the State of Uttar Pradesh there are 218 functional FTSCs in the State with 3 functional FTSCs in Bahraich, as on 31.01.2025.

(c): The Government is committed to leveraging technology to enhance judicial efficiency, transparency, and accessibility. In this regard, the eCourts Mission Mode Project is a key initiative aimed at modernizing the judicial system through the adoption of digital infrastructure and citizen-centric services. Under the Phase I & II of the e-Courts Mission Mode Project, information and communication technology (ICT) had been leveraged for IT enablement of District and Subordinate Courts. 18,735 District and Subordinate Courts were computerized till 2023. WAN connectivity has been provided to 99.5% of court complexes. Video conferencing facility has been enabled between 3,240 court complexes and 1,272 corresponding jails. As on 31.01.2025, 1572 eSewa Kendras in District Courts and 39 eSewa Kendras in High Courts have been made functional to bridge the digital divide by

providing citizen centric services to lawyers and litigants. 28 virtual courts have been set up in 21 States/UTs. As on 31.01.2025, these courts have handled more than 6.66 crore cases and realized more than Rs. 714.99 crores in fines. The Cabinet on 13.09.2023 has approved eCourts Phase-III at an 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 enhanced ease of justice by moving towards digital, online and paperless courts. It intends to incorporate latest technology such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Block Chain, etc. to make justice delivery progressively more robust, easy and accessible to all the stakeholders.

(d) & (e): Measures taken by the Government to provide free legal aid to marginalized communities and ensure easy access to justice are as follows:

- National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) was constituted under the Legal Services Authorities (LSA) Act, 1987 to provide free and competent legal services to the weaker sections of the society including beneficiaries covered under Section 12 of the Act. This Act ensures that opportunities for securing justice are not denied to any citizen by reason of economic or other disabilities, and to organize Lok Adalats for amicable settlement of disputes. For this purpose, the legal services institutions have been set up from the Taluk level to the Supreme Court. The activities/programmes undertaken by Legal Services Authorities include legal aid and advice; legal awareness programmes; legal services/empowerment camps; legal services clinics; legal literacy clubs; Lok Adalats and implementation of victim compensation scheme.
- The details of number of persons benefited through legal aid services provided by the Legal Services Institutions in the country during the last three financial years; 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25 (upto December, 2024) are as follows: -

Year	Number of Beneficiaries
2022-23	12,14,769
2023-24	15,50,164
2024-25(upto December 2024)	11,79,800
TOTAL	39,44,733

- In 2021, a comprehensive, pan-India scheme titled “Designing Innovative Solutions for Holistic Access to Justice in India” (DISHA) was launched for a period of five years (2021- 2026) at an outlay of Rs. 250 crores. The DISHA scheme aims to provide easy, accessible, affordable and citizen-centric legal services through Tele-Law, Nyaya Bandhu (Pro Bono Legal Services) and Legal Literacy and Legal awareness programmes. Under the DISHA scheme, Tele- Law connects citizens with the lawyers through mobile app “Tele-Law” and Toll Free number for rendering pre-litigation advice; Nyaya Bandhu (Pro Bono services) facilitates registered beneficiaries to avail pro bono legal representation in courts and under the Legal Literacy and Legal Awareness Programme, citizens are empowered to know, understand and avail their legal rights, duties and entitlements. Till 28th February 2025, DISHA scheme through its various programmes has outreached approximately 2.10 crore beneficiaries in the country.

- Further, Tele- Law services has impacted women (39.4 %), General (24%), OBCs (31%), SCs (31%) and STs (14%) of its total 1,08,69,661 beneficiaries. Moreover, in order to increase the outreach, the Tele Law web portal and Tele- Law application has been translated in 22 scheduled languages. Special endeavours have also been made to increase its outreach through both print and digital media. Further, special efforts have been made to integrate Tele-Law with Nyaya Bandhu (Pro Bono Legal Services) platform for pre-litigation advice and legal representation in courts. Toll-Free number for citizens through 14454 has been operationalized for instant legal advice and counselling.
