

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3360
TO BE ANSWERED ON FRIDAY, THE 08TH AUGUST, 2025

FAST-TRACK COURTS FOR VULNERABLE GROUPS

3360. SHRI DHAVAL LAXMANBHAI PATEL:

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

- (a) the number of fast-track special courts operational for cases under POCSO and SC/ST Acts as of July 2025;
- (b) whether the Government is working to improve digital case management and reduce pendency; and
- (c) the capacity-building measures for judges and legal aid personnel working in tribal and rural courts?

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): A Centrally Sponsored Scheme for the establishment of Fast Track Special Courts (FTSCs), including exclusive POCSO (ePOCSO) Courts was launched in October, 2019, following the enactment of the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2018 and the order of Hon'ble Supreme Court [Suo Motu Writ (Criminal) No. 1/2019]. These courts are dedicated to the time-bound trial and disposal of pending cases related to rape and crimes under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012. The Scheme has been extended twice, with the latest extension up to 31st March 2026, for establishment of 790 courts. The financial outlay under the scheme is ₹1952.23 crore with ₹1207.24 crore as Central Share to be incurred from Nirbhaya Fund on the CSS pattern.

As of 30.06.2025, 725 FTSCs, including 392 exclusive POCSO (e-POCSO) Courts are functional in 29 States/UTs, which have disposed of 3,34,213 cases since the inception of the Scheme. The State/UT-wise details of functional Fast Track Special Courts (FTSCs) are at **Annexure-I**.

As per information received from the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment, two central Acts have been enacted namely, The Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955, which prescribes punishment for enforcement of any disability arising from practice of untouchability and The Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 to prevent the commission of offences of atrocities against members of Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs). The responsibility of implementation of these Acts lies upon the concerned State Governments and Union Territory Administrations. Section 14 of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 as amended in 2015 specifies that for the purpose of providing for speedy trial, the State Government shall, with the concurrence of the Chief Justice of the High Court, establish an Exclusive Special Court for one or more districts, provided that in Districts where less number of cases under this Act is recorded, the State Government shall, with the concurrence of the Chief Justice of the High Court, specify for such Districts, the Court of sessions to be a Special Court to try the offences under the Act.

As per information received from States/UTs and available with the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment, 211 Exclusive Special Courts have been established across the country to deal with offences registered under the SC/ST (PoA) Act, 1989.

(b): The resolution of pending cases in courts is within the exclusive domain of the judiciary. However, the Government is committed towards facilitating expeditious disposal of cases by judiciary and reducing pendency. To this end, the Government has taken several initiatives to create an enabling ecosystem for faster disposal of cases by the judiciary which include the following:

- i. The National Mission for Justice Delivery and Legal Reforms was set up in August, 2011, with the twin objectives of increasing access to justice by reducing delays 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. 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 30.06.2025, Rs. 12,101.89 crores have been released since the inception of this Scheme in 1993-94. The number of court halls has increased from 15,818

(as on 30.06.2014) to 22,372 (as on 30.06.2025) and the number of residential units has increased from 10,211 (as on 30.06.2014) to 19,851 (as on 30.06.2025), under this Scheme.

- iii. Under Phase I and II of the e-Courts Mission Mode Project, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) was leveraged for IT enablement of District and Subordinate Courts and 18,735 District and Subordinate Courts were computerized till 2023. WAN connectivity was provided to 2977 sites. Video Conferencing facility was enabled between 3,240 court complexes and 1,272 corresponding jails. 778 eSewa Kendras (facilitation centres) were established to bridge the digital divide by providing citizen centric services to lawyers and litigants. 21 virtual courts were set up in 17 States/UTs, which handled more than 2.78 crore cases and realized more than Rs. 384.14 crores in fines up to March 2023.

The Phase-III of the eCourts Project (2023-2027) was approved on 13.09.2023 with an outlay of Rs.7,210 crore, which is aimed at ushering 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) to make justice delivery progressively more robust, easy and accessible. Under the digital Case Management System, eFiling system (version 3.0) has been rolled out with upgraded features for lawyers to access and upload documents related to the cases from anywhere 24X7. The ePayment system has been launched for hassle-free payment of fee etc. National Service and Tracking of Electronic Processes (NSTEP) has been launched for technology-enabled process for serving and issuance of summons. Till date, 506.05 crores pages of court records have been digitized in the High Courts and District Courts. A judgment search portal has started with features such as search by bench, case type, case number, year, petitioner/respondent name, etc. This facility is being provided free of cost to all. Several eCourts services are available on case status, cause lists, judgements etc. to lawyers/litigants through SMS push and pull, email, multilingual eCourts services portal, info kiosks, eCourts Mobile App for lawyers/litigants (3.16 crore downloads till date) and JustIS App for judges (21,716 downloads till date). More than 3.65 crore hearings have taken place through Video Conferencing and live streaming is functional in 11 High Courts. The number of eSewa Kendras (facilitation centres) has increased to 1814 across High Courts and District Courts. To bring in greater objectivity, consistency, transparency and speed, Case Information System (CIS) version 4.0 software has been implemented across the district and taluka courts in the country. Artificial Intelligence and Machine learning tools are being used in case management hearing and for transcription of oral judgements in the Supreme Court of India.

- iv. The Government has been filling up vacancies of Judges in the Supreme Court of India and the High Courts from time to time. From 01.05.2014 to 21.07.2025, 70 Judges have been appointed in the Supreme Court. 1058 new Judges were appointed and 794 Additional Judges were made permanent in

the High Courts during the same period. The sanctioned strength of Judges of the High Courts has increased from 906 in May, 2014 to 1122 till date. The sanctioned and working strengths of judicial officers in District and Subordinate Courts have increased as under:

As on	Sanctioned Strength	Working Strength
31.12.2013	19,518	15,115
05.08.2025	25,848	21,113

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/UT Governments and High Courts concerned.

- v. 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 now been set up under District Courts as well.
- vi. Under the aegis of the Fourteenth Finance Commission, the Fast Track Courts have been established for dealing with cases of heinous crimes, cases involving senior citizens, women, children, etc. As on 30.06.2025, 865 Fast Track Courts are functional across the country. With a view to fast-track criminal cases involving elected MPs / MLAs, ten (10) Special Courts are functional in nine (9) States/UTs. Further, the Central Government had approved a Centrally Sponsored Scheme for setting up Fast Track Special Courts (FTSCs) across the country, for the expeditious disposal of pending cases of Rape and POCSO Act. As on 30.06.2025, 725 FTSCs including 392 exclusive POCSO (ePOCSO) Courts are functional in 29 States/UTs, which have disposed of more than 3,34,000 cases since their inception.
- vii. 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.
- viii. Alternate Dispute Resolution methods have been progressively promoted. Accordingly, The Commercial Courts Act, 2015 was amended in August, 2018 making Pre-institution Mediation and Settlement (PIMS) mandatory in case of commercial disputes. In order to further enhance the efficiency of the PIMS mechanism, the Government, through The Mediation Act, 2023, has further amended the Commercial Court Act, 2015. The amendments to The Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996 have been made in the years 2015, 2019 and 2021 for expediting the speedy resolution of disputes.

Under The Commercial Courts Act, 2015, there is a 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 facts

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.

- ix. Lok Adalat is an important Alternative Disputes Resolution Mechanism available to common people, where the disputes/ cases pending in the court of law or at pre-litigation stage are settled/ compromised amicably. Under The Legal Services Authorities (LSA) Act, 1987, an award made by a Lok Adalat is deemed to be a decree of a civil court and is final and binding on all parties and no appeal lies against it before any court. National Lok Adalats are organized simultaneously in all Taluks, Districts and High Courts on a pre-fixed date.

The details of the cases disposed of in National Lok Adalats during the last four years are as under:

Years	Pre-litigation Cases	Pending Cases	Grand Total
2021	72,06,294	55,81,743	1,27,88,037
2022	3,10,15,215	1,09,10,795	4,19,26,010
2023	7,10,32,980	1,43,09,237	8,53,42,217
2024	8,70,19,059	1,75,07,060	10,45,26,119
2025(up to March)	2,58,28,368	50,82,181	3,09,10,549
Total	22,21,01,916	5,33,91,016	27,54,92,932

- x. The Government launched the Tele-Law programme in 2017, which provides an effective and reliable e-interface platform connecting the needy and disadvantaged sections seeking legal advice and consultation with panel lawyers via video conferencing, telephone and chat facilities available at the Common Service Centres (CSCs) situated in Gram Panchayats and through Tele-Law mobile App.

*Percentage-wise break-up of Tele – Law Data

Till 30th June, 2025	Cases Registered	% wise Break Up	Advice Enabled	% wise Break Up
Gender -wise				
Female	44,81,170	39.58%	44,21,450	39.55%
Male	68,39,728	60.42%	67,58,085	60.45%
Caste Category-wise				
General	26,89,371	23.76%	26,48,100	23.69%
OBC	35,64,430	31.49%	35,16,236	31.45%

SC	35,27,303	31.16%	34,90,737	31.22%
ST	15,39,794	13.60%	15,24,462	13.64%
Total	1,13,20,898		1,11,79,535	

- xi. Efforts have been made to institutionalize pro bono culture and pro bono lawyering in the country. A technological framework has been put in place where advocates volunteering to give their time and services for pro bono work can register as Pro Bono Advocates on Nyaya Bandhu (Android & iOS and Apps). Nyaya Bandhu Services are also available on UMANG Platform. Pro Bono Panel of advocates has been initiated in 23 High Courts at the State/UT level. Pro Bono Clubs have been started in 109 Law Schools to instill Pro Bono culture in budding lawyers.
- xii. The National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) was constituted under the Legal Services Authorities (LSA) Act, 1987 to provide free legal services to the weaker sections of the society including beneficiaries covered under Section 12 of the LSA Act, 1987, which aims to ensure that the opportunities for securing justice are not denied to any citizen by reason of economic or other disabilities. The details of beneficiaries under various activities/programmes undertaken by Legal Services Authorities during the last three years are as under:

Year	Persons benefited through Legal aid and advice
2022-23	12,14,769
2023-24	15,50,164
2024-25	16,57,527
Total	44,22,460

The legal awareness programmes are held across the country by Legal Service Authorities in regard to various laws and schemes relating to children, labourers, victims of disaster, SC and ST, persons suffering from disability, etc. The Legal Services Authorities also prepare booklets and pamphlets in simple language on various laws which are distributed amongst the people. The details of legal awareness programs organized by Legal Service Authorities during the last three years are as under:

Year	Legal Awareness programmes organised	Persons attended
2022-23	4,90,055	6,75,17,665
2023-24	4,30,306	4,49,22,092
2024-25	4,62,988	3,72,32,850
Total	13,83,349	14,96,72,607

(c): The National Judicial Academy regularly conducts academic programmes for judges and legal-aid functionaries, equipping them with the latest legal knowledge, practical skills, and a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by the vulnerable groups, so that legal assistance is provided to those who otherwise cannot afford for effective legal representation, thereby significantly advancing the goal of equal access to justice.

Capacity-building measures for legal aid personnel working in the Legal Services Institutions focus on strengthening their skills, knowledge and resources to effectively serve marginalized and often underserved communities. The National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) has developed 4 Training Modules for training of Legal Services Lawyers and for Para-Legal Volunteers (PLVs). The Legal Services Institutions conduct training programmes for the panel lawyers and PLVs from time to time.

**State/UT-wise details of functional Fast Track Special Courts including
exclusive POCSO (ePOCSO) (as on 30.06.2025)**

Sl. No.	State/UT	Functional Courts	
		FTSCs including exclusive POCSO	Exclusive POCSO
1	Andhra Pradesh	16	16
2	Assam	17	17
3	Bihar	46	46
4	Chandigarh	1	0
5	Chhattisgarh	15	11
6	Delhi	16	11
7	Goa	1	0
8	Gujarat	35	24
9	Haryana	18	14
10	Himachal Pradesh	6	3
11	J&K	4	2
12	Karnataka	30	17
13	Kerala	55	14
14	Madhya Pradesh	67	56
15	Maharashtra	2	1
16	Manipur	2	0
17	Meghalaya	5	5
18	Mizoram	3	1
19	Nagaland	1	0
20	Odisha	44	23
21	Puducherry	1	1
22	Punjab	12	3
23	Rajasthan	45	30
24	Tamil Nadu	14	14
25	Telangana	36	0
26	Tripura	3	1
27	Uttarakhand	4	0
28	Uttar Pradesh	218	74
29	West Bengal	8	8
30	Jharkhand *	0	0
31	A&N Islands**	0	0
32	Arunachal Pradesh***	0	0
	TOTAL	725	392

Note: At the inception of the Scheme, the allocation of FTSCs across the country was based on a criterion of 65 to 165 pending cases per court, meaning one FTSC would be established for every 65 to 165 pending cases. Based on that, only 31 States/UTs were eligible to join the Scheme.

* The State of Jharkhand has decided to exit the FTSC Scheme vide letter dated 07.07.2025. However, the cumulative disposal of 9,114 cases since the inception of the Scheme up to May 2025 continues to be included in the overall disposal figures reported under the FTSC Scheme.

** A&N islands has consented to join the Scheme, but is yet to operationalize any court.

*** Arunachal Pradesh has opted out of the Scheme citing a very low number of pending cases of Rape and POCSO Act.