

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

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 4926
TO BE ANSWERED ON FRIDAY, THE 01st APRIL, 2022

Compulsory e-filing of cases

4926. SHRI VISHNU DAYAL RAM:

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

- (a) whether the compulsory e-filing of cases and documents in courts undertaken during the COVID-19 pandemic will be continued as a permanent measure;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government has taken any other initiatives to reduce excessive waste of paper when legal proceedings are undertaken; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE

(SHRI KIREN RIJJU)

(a) & (b): The decision for continued compulsory e-filing of cases and documents in the Courts is an administrative matter which falls strictly within the purview and domain of the Judiciary and Central Government has no role to play in the matter. However, Department of Justice has requested all Central & State Government Departments including the Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) to use eFiling in all commercial disputes coming up in the commercial courts. Further, instructions have been issued by eCommittee of the Supreme

Court to all High Courts to ensure that all Government litigation should be e-filed. Department of Justice has also advised all Central Ministries/ Departments to use eFiling in all Government litigation. A similar communication has also been sent by the Department of Legal Affairs to all Ministries/ Departments of the Government of India, as well as to all Law Officers for e-filing in respect of litigation on behalf of Union of India by the Ministries/Departments concerned, including Autonomous Bodies/Subordinate Offices/Attached Offices and PSUs under their administrative control.

(c) & (d): The Department of Justice in close coordination with eCommittee of Supreme Court of India is implementing the eCourts Phase I and Phase II with objective of universal computerisation of all the District & Subordinate Court complexes. This has helped in digitization which has resulted in reduction of excessive waste of paper during legal proceedings. The following steps have been taken up under eCourts project by the eCommittee of the Supreme Court and the Department of Justice:

- i. Under the Wide Area Network (WAN) Project, 2964 courts 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. A new software patch and user manual for COVID-19 management has also been developed to help in smart scheduling of cases.
- iv. 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 19.92 crore cases and more than 16.61 crore orders / judgments pertaining to these computerized (as on 02.03.2022). 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.

- v. 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 75.76 lakh downloads till 28th February 2022) and JustIS app for judges (17,013 downloads till 3rd March 2022). JustIS mobile app is now available in iOS as well.
- vi. 17 Virtual Courts in 13 States/UTs have been operationalized to handle traffic challan cases. More than 1.32 crore cases have been handled by 17 virtual courts and in more than 22 lakhs cases online fine of more than Rs. 229 crore has been realised till 03.03.2022.
- vii. The Supreme Court of India emerged as a global leader by conducting 2,18,891 hearings (till 14.03.2022 since the beginning of lockdown period). The High Courts (61,02,859 cases and Subordinate Courts (1,23,19,917 cases) have conducted 1.84 crore virtual hearings till 28.02.2022. 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.

- viii. 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.
- ix. 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 23 High Courts till 28.02.2022.
- x. Government has released Rs. 12.54 crore for setting up eSewa Kendras. As on 28.02.2022, 493 eSewa Kendra's have been made functional in District Courts under 25 High Courts.
- xi. 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 26 States/ UTs.
- xii. 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.
- xiii. To make effective use of database created through National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG) and to make the information available to public 32 LED Display Message Sign Board System called Justice Clocks, have been installed in 21 High Courts.
- xiv. 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 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 3,60,993 stakeholders, including High Court Judges, Judges of the District Judiciary, Court Staff, Master Trainers among Judges/DSA, Technical Staff of High Courts, and Advocates.
