

Talking Points for Hon'ble Minister of Law and Justice
Meeting of the Chairpersons of Computer Committees of
High Courts o 15th February, 2015 at 10.30 AM

Judiciary has an important role in the success of Hon'ble Prime Minister's Make-In-India campaign which aims at making India a favourable investment destination. So far following efforts have been made to improve the justice delivery system :

- A sum of Rs. 3000 crores has been released since 2011 for construction of courts/quarters.
- A sum of Rs. 1947 crores has been released under the 13th Finance Commission for establishment of ADR Centres and Judicial Academies, conduct of Lok Adalats and Legal Aid services and training of Judicial Officers and public prosecutors.
- Recently, letters were addressed to all Chief Justices of High Courts to inform Judicial Officers of the provisions of CrPC and CPC relating to plea bargaining, compounding of offences, excessive adjournments, delivery of summons and recording of evidence etc. and also to encourage use of pre-trial proceeding, regular monitoring of court performance and mandatory prior notice in civil cases.

The eCourts Integrated Mission Mode Project is one of the National eGovernance projects, being implemented for ICT enablement of district and subordinate courts of the country. The project approved in the year 2010 envisages computerization of 14,249 district and subordinate courts with budget of Rs. 935 crore by 31st March, 2015.

The objective of the eCourts project is to provide designated services to litigants, lawyers and the judiciary. Currently, litigants can access case status information in respect of over 3 crore pending and decided cases in more than 11,000 courts. Litigants and lawyers are also provided services through Judicial Service Centre at the court complexes

such as case filing, certified copies of orders and judgments, case status etc.

As on 31st January, 2015, out of 14,249 courts to be computerized -

- Sites for 14,249 courts (100%) have been made ready for computerization.
- LAN has been installed at 13,619 courts (95.6%), hardware at 13,436 (94.3%) and software at 13,323 courts (93.5%).
- ICT infrastructure of the Supreme Court and High Courts has also been upgraded.
- More than 14000 Judicial Officers and more than 4000 court staff have been trained and Laptops have been provided to 14,309 Judicial Officers.

However, we have still some challenges to meet :

- There is adverse perception in the minds of investors due to worrisome backlog of more than 3 crore pending cases.
- The actual strength of Judicial Officers is 15,000 against the sanctioned strength of 20,000. There is urgent need for innovative action to fill up vacancies.
- Entries on National Judicial Data Grid(NJDG) are not complete. Category-wise case data needs to be made available.
- There is urgent need for process re-engineering to simplify court procedures.
- Many CrPC/CPC provisions on issue of summons and adjournments are not being followed.

With a view to speed up disposal of pending cases, letters were addressed to Bombay and Delhi High Courts to -

- assign commercial cases to specified courts/judges and expedite availability of e-filing and e-service of notices/summons.
- Improved court and case management for optional work allocation.
- NJDG is a handy tool for electronic case management and regular monitoring.

I am happy to note that issues relating to improving the NJDG, making it public, mapping of court complexes and re-engineering of court procedures, which are all very important issues, are being discussed in this meeting. I hope concrete steps would be decided upon.

Approval of EFC has been obtained for Rs. 1670 crore for Phase II of the eCourts Project. It is hoped that the State Governments will provide funds for technical manpower in court complexes. At the end of Phase II, we hope –

- Litigants can e-file cases and can access digitally signed judgments.
- E-service of notices and summons will be facilitated by technology.
- Cloud computing will enable analysis for improved court management.
- There will be universal computerization and ICT enablement of Judiciary.

Phase II of eCourts project is also under process which envisages further ICT enhancement through universal computerization of all the courts. The project is proposed to be completed in the three year duration within the estimated cost of Rs. 2765 crore.

I am happy that preparatory action for commissioning of Phase II of the Project is being discussed in this meeting. I assure Government's wholehearted support for ICT enablement of the judiciary. At the same time, I request you all to work in close coordination with the eCommittee of the Supreme Court of India and the Government for achieving the objective of elimination of long pending cases and improving the quality of justice through ICt enablement.
