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NATIONAL

CJI LAUNCHES VARIOUS APPLICATIONS TO FACILITATE LITIGANTS AND LAWYERS

The CJI has launched various applications for the benefit of the litigants and lawyers at an event in the Supreme Court of India.

Three applications of e-filing, e-pay, and NSTEP (National Service and Tracking of Electronic Processes) created under the e-Courts project were launched during the occasion.

The Department of Justice is administering a Wide Area Network (WAN) connectivity project connecting all the district and taluka courts through BSNL in a single network grid under the e-Courts Project.

E-Filing:

The e-Filing application will facilitate efficient administration of Judicial System, as it will ease pressure on filing counters and will speed up work flow processing.

Data entry will be more accurate which will help to take data driven decisions in court administration.

It will start building digital repositories which will auto generate paper books and can be quickly transmitted to Higher Courts which will reduce delays.

The application will help reduce touch point of litigants will also result in more productivity of staff members and can send documents for service to other locations or mail addresses.

E-pay:

The E-Pay application at ecourts.gov.in is a unified portal wherein facility to pay online court fees is provided.

The platform is user friendly which can be used with very little self help. E-Payment is a safe and secure, quick and easy way to pay court fees.

At present, the facility will be made operational in two states of Maharashtra and Haryana.

OTP authentication provides secure way to financial transactions and one can get instant acknowledgement through SMS and print receipt.

The application is beneficial to judicial administration since verification of court fees is more easy, secure and transparent and accurate figures of court fees collected can be generated for any court, district or State.

National Service and Tracking of Electronic Processes (NSTEP):

It is a collaboration between Case Information Software (CIS), Web portal and Mobile Application.

It is a transparent and secure system for transmission of process from one location to another, and shall address delays in process serving particularly for processes beyond jurisdiction.

NSTEP will lead to secured auto generation of processes with unique QR Code through CIS, publishing processes on portal and transmission of processes to other court complexes in the country and ultimately to mobile app of the bailiffs.

A facility to send electronic processes directly to registered mail of the addressee by secured mechanism, to upload documents associated with process and facilities like tracking GPS where process is served or otherwise, obtaining photograph and on screen signature after service is provided.

Immediate communication of status of service of process to Court and stake holders will be done and there is a secured dedicated system for transmission of processes from one district to another or from one state to another with travel time in seconds.

The status of service can also be tracked on public portal. It will empower litigants to take immediate follow up action which will reduce delays.

E-Courts Project:

The e-Courts Project was conceptualized on the basis of the "National Policy and Action Plan for Implementation of Information and

Communication Technology (ICT) in the Indian Judiciary – 2005”.

The plan was formulated by E-committee of the Supreme Court.

The e-Courts Mission Mode Project is a Pan-India Project monitored and funded by Department of Justice for the District Courts across the country.

In 2013 CJI launched the e-Courts National portal ecourts.gov.in of the e-Courts Project.

More than 2852 Districts and Taluka Court Complexes have secured their presence on the NJDG and are providing Case Status, Cause lists online with many of them also uploading orders/judgments.

The data of more than 7 crore pending and disposed of cases and 3.3 crore orders/judgments of District Courts in India is available on NJDG at present.

National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG):

The NJDG for district & subordinate courts has been created as an online platform which now provides information relating to judicial proceedings/decisions of 16,089 computerized district and subordinate courts of the country.

The portal provides online information to litigants such as details of case registration, cause list, case status, daily orders, and final judgments.

Currently litigants can access case status information in respect of over 10 crore cases and more than 7 crore orders / judgments.

Case information is thus available speedily to the petitioners and respondents.

The e-Courts portal and National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG) also serve as tools of efficient court and case management for judiciary which aids in disposal of pending cases.

ISRO TELEMEDICINE NODES FOR SOLDIERS IN HIGH-ALTITUDE AREAS

In a major effort to improve emergency medical support to soldiers posted in high-altitude areas, especially Siachen, the Integrated Defence Staff of the Defence Ministry and the ISRO signed a MoU to set up

telemedicine nodes in critical places across the country.

ISRO will establish 53 more nodes in the first phase over and above the existing 20, in various establishments of the Army, Navy and Air Force across the country.

As part of this, in addition to a functioning node on the Siachen glacier, four more nodes are being established to enable medical consultation between soldiers deployed on the glacier and medical echelons in the rear.

During winter months, many of the remote posts are cut off for several months because of adverse terrain and extreme weather, making emergency evacuation near impossible.

Communication through satellite-enabled telemedicine nodes will be a paradigm shift in the delivery of lifesaving health care till the weather clears up and movement is possible.

This joint initiative by ISRO and the Armed Forces Medical Services will transform the reach of telemedicine to soldiers, airmen and sailors in remote and isolated posts.

POLL PANEL TO BRAINSTORM ON KEY ISSUES

Recently Chief Election Commissioner emphatically ruled out the possibility of holding simultaneous elections to the state assemblies along with the Lok Sabha poll.

However ECI has brought to notice range of issues to various political parties and invited a debate over them.

In the times of social media and phased elections, how can campaign silence be maintained during the last 48 hours before the elections?

The Election Commission will be debating this and seven other issues, including limiting of expenditure and increasing participation of women, at a multi-party meeting.

All seven registered national political parties and 51 State political parties have been invited.

The law prohibits canvassing during the last 48 hours before the elections.

This is meant to create an environment of neutrality and “silence” for the voter to exercise his franchise through reasoned reflection rather than be swayed by last-minute appeals by parties and candidates.

The ECI has sought suggestions on how to address the issue of online canvassing to promote or prejudice the electoral prospects of a party/candidate on social media during the last 48 hours.

Many parties in opposition have been consistently asking this question in view of the extensive campaigning on the ground and on social media ahead of each election.

The ECI has asked the parties if the print media should also be brought within the ambit of Section 126(1)(b).

This section lists mediums in which display of election matter is prohibited and includes television, cinematograph or similar apparatus of the Representation of the People Act.

The ECI has asked political parties on whether there should be a ceiling on party election expenditure. The present election laws only provide a limit on a candidate’s expenditure.

It has proposed that such ceiling should be either 50% of or not more than the expenditure ceiling limit provided for the candidate multiplied by the number of candidates of the party contesting the election.

The Commission wants to know the views of political parties on bringing a ceiling for expenditure in the Legislative Council elections.

In these elections, huge amounts of unaccounted-for money are often spent by the candidates.

The Commission has asked the parties to take note of alternative modes of voting for domestic migrants and absentee voters, such as postal, proxy and e-voting.

The Commission has proposed five strategies, the agenda note says, to ensure that no migrant worker is left out.

These include developing portability of voting rights by linking voter ID and Aadhaar.

A one-time voluntary registration system for domestic migrants, electoral support services to be provided to migrants at the source and destination areas, raising awareness of voters’ rights and a helpline for domestic migrants are the other measures suggested by the Commission.

The ECI has asked what measures political parties can undertake to encourage enhanced representation of women within the organization structure of the political party.

It has pulled out embarrassing statistics to build the case for a greater presence of women.

There are only 11.4% women in the 16th Lok Sabha, substantially lower than the global average of 22.9%, the Commission noted.

It has said that at least seven countries have laws reserving seats for women in legislature, including Nepal.

NATIONAL LOGISTICS PORTAL TO BOOST TRADE COMPETITIVENESS

A National Logistics Portal is being developed to ensure ease of trading in the international and domestic markets.

India eyes lowering logistics cost from 14 per cent of GDP to less than 10 per cent by 2022.

The portal will link all the stakeholders of export-import, domestic trade and all trade activities on a single platform.

This will help in generating jobs, increasing trade competitiveness and helping the country transform into a logistics hub.

It will connect business, create opportunities and bring together various ministries, departments and the private sector.

Stakeholders like traders, manufacturers, logistics service providers, infrastructure providers, financial services, government departments and groups and associations will all be on one platform

The Department of Commerce has earlier decided to create a portal which will be a single window online marketplace for trade.

India's logistics sector is highly defragmented and the department aims to reduce the logistics cost from the present 14 per cent of GDP to less than 10 per cent by 2022.

The country's logistics is very complex with more than 20 government agencies, 40 partnering government agencies (PGAs), 37 export promotion councils, 500 certifications, 10,000 commodities and USD 160 billion market size.

It also involves 12 million employment bases, 200 shipping agencies, 36 logistics services, 50 IT ecosystems and banks and insurance agencies.

As per the Economic Survey 2017-18, the Indian logistics sector provides livelihood to more than 22 million people.

Improving the sector will facilitate 10 per cent decrease in indirect logistics cost leading to the growth of 5 to 8 per cent in exports.

Further, the Survey estimates that the worth of Indian logistics market would be around USD 215 billion in next two years compared to about USD 160 billion currently.

INDIA'S FIRST ISTS CONNECTED WIND POWER PROJECT COMMISSIONED

Solar Energy Corporation of India Limited (SECI) conducted India's first auction of wind power projects in February 2017.

In this the tariff of Rs. 3.46 was discovered, which was much lower than feed in tariffs in vogue those days.

Under ISTS power generated from one state (renewable resource rich state) could be transmitted to other renewable deficient states.

A part capacity of 126 MW, located in Bhuj (Gujarat) was Commissioned. The energy generated from this project is being purchased by Bihar, Odisha, Jharkhand and UP.

The auction signified a major shift from the earlier regime of state-specific Feed-in-Tariff (FiT) model to a Pan-India, market-driven mechanism.

Inter-state transmission system (ISTS):

Grant of Connectivity and General Network Access to the inter-state transmission system (ISTS) and other related matters, Regulations, 2017 provide for interstate transmission.

It would allow for more than one power generator to share a dedicated transmission line that connects their generating stations to the ISTS polling station.

This will be done after all aspects of the sharing are formalized among the generators, including the sharing of transmission charges and transmission line losses among the generators.
