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GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**

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**Law Minister holds review meeting with Attorney General, Solicitor General  
and all the Law Officers of Govt. of India**

**Let us take lockdown as an opportunity to make digital systems in  
justice delivery more robust: Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad**

New Delhi 10<sup>th</sup> May, 2020

Union Minister for Law and Justice, Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad today held an interaction with the team of law officers headed by the Attorney General of India through video conferencing. The Attorney General of India, Shri K. K. Venugopal, Solicitor General Shri Tushar Mehta, all the Additional Solicitors General and Assistant Solicitors General, Secretary of Department of Legal Affairs and Secretary of Department of Justice attended this meeting. This is first of its kind of virtual meeting organized during the lockdown imposed to curb spread of Corona Virus Outbreak.

The Law Minister, in his opening remarks, said that we are living in challenging times and the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi is leading the country as Team India where the Govt. of India and all the state governments frequently interact to arrive at suitable response to the challenge. Shri Prasad told the Law Officers that the Prime Minister himself undertook a series of virtual meetings with the Chief Ministers to arrive at a unanimous view about the need for lockdown and addressing the challenges arising therefrom. The Cabinet Secretary and the Health Secretary are interacting with various Chief Secretaries and Health Secretaries. Based upon extensive feedback, the Home Ministry, the Health Ministry and other concerned Ministries issue guidelines under the Disaster Management Act.

The Minister specially emphasized that addressing such a serious pandemic throws up complicated and sensitive nature of challenges, which the governance system has responded and it will be appropriate that this decision-making process of the Government of India and the state governments needs to be trusted. The Attorney

General also supported this view and particularly highlighted that courts need to appreciate this. The Solicitor General Shri Tushar Mehta explained the nature of cases being filed and the orders being passed by the Supreme Court from time to time which have upheld the guidelines issued by the Government and the action taken.

The Law Minister in particular highlighted that during these challenging times overzealous PILs needs to be avoided. Though one cannot stop anyone from filing cases but there must be an effective response to these types of interventions. This was appreciated by the Attorney General and all other law officers. Secretary, Department of Justice highlighted the issues about e-Courts and other developments which are being pursued to make it more effective. He shared that during the lockdown there is a significant growth in number of Advocates who have registered for e-filing of cases. 1282 Advocates have registered for e-filing of petitions during lockdown out of which 543 Advocates have registered in last one week alone. Secretary, Department of Legal Affairs explained the coordination system available in the Law Ministry about following the cases filed related to COVID-19. It was a common consensus that there has to be a uniformity in our approach and the orders of the Supreme Court should be immediately conveyed to various High Courts.

The Attorney General and many other law officers emphasized that there is a need to strengthen the e-Courts system by addressing the connectivity issues and by training of lawyers in e-Courts management. The Law Minister directed the Secretary Justice who is also a member of the e-Court Committee of the Supreme Court to coordinate to bring these challenges before the Committee and in coordination with NIC and other agencies and improve the system. It was felt that in view of the seriousness of the pandemic Court proceedings through video conferencing may remain a norm for some time to come. The Law Minister in particular emphasized to take this challenge as an opportunity to make digital systems in justice delivery more robust.

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