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Gram nyayalayas - Centre's answer to cut pending cases

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

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The Hindu Governor of Karnataka H.R. Bharadwaj (right) having a word with M. Veerappa Moily, Union Minister of Law and Justice, (left) Photo: K. Gopinathan

Union Minister for Law and Justice M. Veerappa Moily said the Centre proposes to establish 5,000 gram nyayalayas (village courts) in the next three years in an attempt to reduce the number of pending cases in the country.

Inaugurating a regional conference on Judicial Reforms and Police Reforms at Indian Institute of Public Administration in Bangalore on Saturday, Mr. Moily said the Government would be establishing 200 such gram nyayalayas in the first phase, which will begin functioning from October 2.

“The Government order for setting up gram nyayalayas has already been issued,” he said, and added that the Government will approach the Planning Commission for allocation of an additional Rs. 50 crore during November-December this year to establish 400 more gram nyayalayas.

Mr. Moily said the setting up of the village courts would “revolutionise” the judicial system in the country, which was weighed down by an estimated 3.65 crore pending cases, a majority of which are in different stages of arbitration in lower level courts. At least 50 per cent of the cases would be disposed of in a year or two after the gram nyayalayas started functioning. The law mandates that the village courts dispose of cases within six months of their filing.

TARGET

He said a target would be fixed for disposing of cases and hoped that the country’s courts would be rid of pending cases in two years’ time. “In two to three years’ time, we have to ensure that we having only running cases and not pending cases,” Mr. Moily added.

He said a comprehensive piece of legislation on judicial accountability would be introduced in the coming winter session of the Parliament. The proposed Bill would not only cover aspects relating to disclosure of judges’ assets, but also ensure transparency in the appointment of judges.

Mr. Moily said a national consultation on judicial reforms would be held on October 24 to discuss the state of affairs of the judicial system in the country and the steps needed to reform it. “Resistance to the reforms may come, but we will face it. We have held discussions with the judiciary also on the matter and the judiciary is not averse to such reforms,” he said.

COMMERCIAL BENCH

Meanwhile, speaking to presspersons, Mr. Moily said the Government proposes to establish Commercial Benches in all High Courts to take up cases in which business worth more than Rs. 2 crore was involved in a dispute.

The delay in disposing of such cases was not only affecting the litigant parties and the business but also causing a loss to the State exchequer in the form of various taxes.

He said the Union Government was seriously considering a proposal to establish an IIT in Karnataka during the 11th Five-Year Plan and Muddenahalli in Chickaballapur could be one of the places identified for the purpose.