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Digital Judiciary Milestone: Sikkim Leads India's Paperless Court System

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In a significant step towards judicial reforms, Sikkim has been declared the first fully paperless judiciary state in India. The announcement was made by Justice Surya Kant during a national-level conclave held in Gangtok.?

Overview of the Development:

The transition to a paperless judiciary marks a shift from traditional paper-based court procedures to a digitally integrated justice delivery system. This includes mechanisms such as e-filing, digital records, and online case tracking, aimed at improving efficiency and transparency.

The initiative aligns with India's broader push towards digital governance and judicial modernisation, enhancing accessibility for citizens, especially in geographically challenging regions.

Major Features of a Paperless Judiciary:

Complete reliance on electronic documentation instead of physical files

Introduction of e-filing systems for case submission

Virtual hearings and remote participation

Online case management and tracking systems

Reduced dependency on physical court visits

These features collectively ensure speedier, transparent, and cost-effective justice delivery.

Significance for Justice Delivery:

Improved Accessibility: Eliminates geographical barriers, especially in hilly regions like Sikkim

Efficiency Gains: Faster case processing and reduced delays

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Transparency: Digital records reduce chances of file mismanagement

Cost Reduction: Minimises expenses related to travel and paperwork

Environmental Benefits: Promotes sustainability by reducing paper usage

The reform also reflects a move towards a citizen-centric judiciary supported by technology.

Institutional and Policy Linkages:

Part of the broader e-Courts Project under the Government of India

Supported by digital tools such as AI-based platforms (SUPACE, SUVAS)

Linked to the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047 for a technology-driven governance system

Encourages judicial education reforms to adapt to emerging technologies

Challenges and Concerns:

Digital Divide: Limited access for rural or digitally unskilled populations

Cybersecurity Risks: Protection of sensitive judicial data

Ethical Concerns: Ensuring AI does not compromise fairness and natural justice

Capacity Building: Need for training judges and legal professionals in digital systems