

HIGH COURT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR AND LADAKH
(OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR GENERAL AT JAMMU)

Subject: Compliance of directions passed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court vide order dated 16.04.2026 in Crl MP No.7862/2017 of 2026 in case titled Shankar Mahto Vs State Of Bihar.

CIRCULAR

No. 13 of 2026/RG

Dated: 30.04.2026

In compliance to the directions of Hon'ble Supreme Court vide its order dated 16.04.2026, passed in case captioned above regarding delay affecting matters involving legal aid, particularly Special Leave Petitions and Appeals by SCLSCs and HCLSCs, and in light of the Resolution of the Meeting dated 23.04.2026 of Hon'ble Executive Chairman, J&K Legal Services Authority and Hon'ble Executive Chairperson, Ladakh Legal Services Authority, following directives are hereby issued for adherence by all District Courts in the UTs of J&K and Ladakh:-

1. CATEOGRIZATION OF CASES

All cases shall be categorised based on the nature and severity of the case, to prioritise resources and ensure expedited handling of urgent matters. Such categorisation shall ensure timelines, allocation of resources and frequency of monitoring.

Category A1

Category A1 shall comprise high-priority criminal cases, including matters involving death sentences, life imprisonment, or sentences of ten years or more, where the accused is in custody, as well as cases involving juvenile offenders. These cases involve severe deprivation of liberty and, therefore, require immediate attention to prevent prolonged injustice. In such matters, mandatory daily status updates shall be ensured during the initial fifteen days following the pronouncement of judgment.

Category A2

Category A2 shall comprise high-priority civil cases, including matters relating to imminent demolition of property, dispossession or eviction, medical termination of pregnancy, and custody of children, as well as any other category of cases as may be duly notified by the High Court Legal Services Committees from time to time.

Category B

Category B shall comprise medium-priority criminal cases, including those involving sentences of less than ten years but more than one year, or cases with significant human rights implications, such as those concerning women or cases under the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act. These cases require a balanced approach between urgency and resource constraints, and

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shall be subject to bi-weekly review and prioritised assignment of translators.

Category C

Category C shall comprise all other civil matters, including family disputes and property cases and criminal cases involving sentences of one year or less. Such cases shall ordinarily be processed in accordance with standard timelines, unless escalated due to exceptional circumstances, including cases involving vulnerable groups. These cases shall be subject to quarterly audits to ensure compliance. However, any case may be re-categorised at any stage upon review by the Monitoring Committee of the High Court Legal Services Committee, if circumstances so warrant, including situations such as deterioration in the health condition of the convict.

2. TRANSLATION AND DOCUMENTATION

Initiation of Translation

Translation shall commence immediately upon admission of an appeal for final hearing in the High Court, or upon receipt of the convict's consent for appeal in criminal cases, and upon acknowledgment of eligibility for grant of legal aid by the concerned Legal Services Institution, i.e., the High Court Legal Services Committee or the Supreme Court Legal Services Committee. All documents shall be scanned and digitised before and after translation to enable secure sharing.

Priority Documents for Translation

The following documents shall be translated on a priority basis to be filed along with the appeal or Special Leave Petition, namely:

<u>S. No.</u>	<u>Document Description</u>
(a)	Judgment (full text, including reasoning and operative part), orders, and pleadings
(b)	Statements of at least two principal witnesses, including cross-examination
(c)	First Information Report (FIR) and chargesheet (including annexures)
(d)	Relevant exhibits, such as medical reports, forensic evidence, or property documents
(e)	Trial court records, including depositions of key experts (e.g., doctors, ballistic experts)
(f)	Bail applications, interim orders, and any prior appellate decisions
(g)	Convict's personal details, including socio-economic background for legal aid eligibility

The rest of the District Court record shall also be fully translated to ensure completeness of the record and shall be filed within sixty days of filing of the appeal or Special Leave Petition.

Translation Standards

Translations shall be carried out from the original language (e.g., regional languages) to English, unless otherwise specified by the

appellate court, and shall use legal terminology consistent with standard judicial glossaries. Every translated document shall include:-

- (a) A unique reference number linking it to the original,
- (b) Page-wise cross-references,
- (c) A Certificate of True Translation signed by the translator and the supervisor
- (d) Declaration of Non-Association with the case or the parties, duly signed by the translator and supervisor to avoid any conflict of interest.

All translations shall be prepared in PDF format with searchable text and shall be properly watermarked for authenticity.

Handling Sensitive Information

Personal identifiers, such as names of victims or protected witnesses, addresses, Aadhaar numbers and similar details, shall be redacted in accordance with applicable data protection laws. Translations of sealed documents (e.g., in-camera proceedings) shall be handled with due confidentiality and care.

3. TIMELINES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The following table outlines key stages, responsible authorities, actions, and timelines. All timelines are mandatory and subject to extension only with documented justification and approval from the HCLSC.

Appeal Before the High Court – Criminal Cases

STAGE	RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITY	ACTION	TIMELINE	CATEGORY-SPECIFIC NOTES
Pronouncement of judgment	Trial Court	Supply a copy of the judgment of conviction along with the order on sentence. A translated copy of the Trial Court Judgment to be provided to the Convict	On the same day, in case the accused is present in court or within 24 hours if the accused is present through VC Within 15 days.	For Category A: Notify HCLSC via email/SMS alert immediately on pronouncement.
Communication of judgment	Trial Court	Transmit judgment to HCLSC and DLSA.	Within 7 days	Include case categorization and convict details.
Obtaining convict's consent to appeal	HCLSC / DLSA / Jail Authorities	Conduct VC or in person interaction; document consent in writing.	Within 7 days of receiving judgment	For Category A: Daily follow-ups if consent is delayed.
Document Collection and Digitization	DLSA/Jail Superintendent	Gather all trial records; scan and upload to platform.	Within 10 days	Ensure completeness; flag missing documents.

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STAGE	RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITY	ACTION	TIMELINE	CATEGORY-SPECIFIC NOTES
Translator Assignment	HCLSC Secretary / Registrar High Court	Assign from empanelled list based on language expertise.	Within 15 days (Category A); 20 days (B); 30 days (C) from the date on which the appeal was admitted by the High Court.	Prioritize LL.B. degree holders for complex cases.
Translation of Priority Documents	Assigned Translator/ Supervisor	Translate, vet, and certify documents.	Within 15 days (Category A); 20 days (B); 30 days (C)	Daily progress reports for Category A.

SLP/APPEAL BEFORE THE SUPREME COURT – CRIMINAL CASES

STAGE	RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITY	ACTION	TIMELINE	CATEGORY-SPECIFIC NOTES
Pronouncement of judgment	High Court	Upload certified copy to the integrated digital platform.	Immediate (within 24 hours)	For Category A: Notify HCLSC via email/SMS alert.
Communication of judgment	Registrar (Judicial), High Court	Transmit judgment to HCLSC	Within 7 days	Include case categorization and convict details.
Obtaining convict's consent to appeal	HCLSC / DLSA / Jail Authorities	Conduct VC or in person interaction; document consent in writing.	Within 7 days of receiving judgment	For Category A: Daily follow-ups if consent is delayed.
Document Collection and Digitization	DLSA / Jail Superintendent	Gather all trial records; scan and upload to platform.	Within 10 days of consent	Ensure completeness; flag missing documents.
Translator Assignment	HCLSC Secretary	Assign from empanelled list based on language expertise.	Within 3 days of consent	Prioritize LL.B. degree holders for complex cases.
Translation of Priority Documents	Assigned Translator / Supervisor	Translate, vet, and certify documents.	Within 15 days (Category A); 20 days (B); 30 days (C) of consent	Daily progress reports for Category A.
Transmission of Translated Records	HCLSC	Compile, verify, and transmit to SCLSC/legal aid lawyer for filing.	Within 30 days (A); 45 days (B); 60 days (C) of consent.	Use secure digital channels; obtain acknowledgment.
Filing of Appeal/SLP	Legal Aid Lawyer / SCLSC	Prepare and file based on transmitted records.	Within 15 days of receipt of consent	Report any deficiencies immediately.
Monitoring of	Jail	Update Legal		Escalate delays to

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STAGE	RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITY	ACTION	TIMELINE	CATEGORY-SPECIFIC NOTES
Jail Cases	Superintendent with DLSA	Proceedings Reviewed every 15 days of consent Register; conduct VC reviews.		HCLSC.

APPEAL BEFORE THE SUPREME COURT – CIVIL CASES

STAGE	RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITY	ACTION	TIMELINE	CATEGORY-SPECIFIC NOTES
Pronouncement of judgment	High Court	Upload certified copy to the integrated digital platform.	Immediate (within 24 hours)	For Category A: Notify HCLSC via email/SMS alert.
Communication of judgment	HCLSC	Email/ Handover a copy of the judgment to the Legal Aid Beneficiary	Within 24 Hours for Category A Cases and within 7 days for other cases	Include case categorization
Document Collection and Digitization	HCLSC in case the legal aid beneficiary received legal aid before the High Court, otherwise the Legal Aid Beneficiary.	Gather all trial records; scan and upload to platform.	Within 10 days	Ensure completeness; flag missing documents.

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4. PLATFORM INTEGRATION

HCLSCs and Jail Authorities shall integrate their systems into a unified digital platform in coordination with SCLSC to ensure seamless coordination, monitoring and timely exchange of information. NALSA shall be given access to this platform for real-time oversight and data analysis.

5. MONITORING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

(a) The HCLSC/ SCLSC shall share the data regarding the marking of matters and progress of filing of matters with the Monitoring Committee on a weekly basis.

(b) The Monitoring Committee constituted vide J&K HCLSC order No. 06-HCLSC of 2026 dated 28.04.2026 shall meet at least on a fortnightly basis, virtually or physically, to review the progress of the matters and shall be responsible for issuing necessary recommendations to the HCLSC/SCLSC Member Secretary to maintain the efficiency of the system.

6. COORDINATION WITH JAIL AUTHORITIES

Mandatory video conferencing meetings shall be held every fifteen days involving the High Court Legal Services Committee, the District Legal Services Authority, the Jail Superintendent, and the convict (where feasible). Further, the Legal Services Authority and the Supreme Court Legal Services Committee shall coordinate to facilitate a virtual meeting between the lawyer handling the matter at the High Court and the lawyer assigned by the Supreme Court Legal Services Committee, so that the latter is duly briefed on the facts and issues involved in the case within one week from the date of such assignment.

7. DELAY EXPLANATION

This Circular/SOP ensures a robust, transparent system to uphold justice in legal aid matters. Compliance is mandatory. A checklist in the following Format shall be incorporated by all HCLSCs to be submitted in all applications filed seeking condonation of delay before the High Court :-

Date on which the impugned order was uploaded on the website of the High Court/Trial Court;	
Date on which the impugned order was communicated to the convicted person:	
Date on which consent to file Appeal was given:	
Date on which translated documents along with relevant papers were transmitted to HCLSC:	
Date on which a lawyer was appointed by HCLSC:	
Date on which documents were handed over to the lawyer by HCLSC:	
Date of filing of the Appeal:	
Explanation/Remarks (if any):	

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8. In light of the directions contained in Para 9(b) and 9(d), Registrar (IT) shall monitor/coordinate with National Informatics Centre (NIC) for the

implementation of the SOP, so as to ensure the creation of a seamless, efficient and unified digital platform enabling the SCLSC, HCLSCs and Jail Authorities to upload and exchange information within a period of two months from the date of the order of the Hon'ble Supreme Court, i.e. 16.04.2026.

By Order.



**(M. K. Sharma)
Registrar General**

No: 19506-60 RG/GS

Dated: 30-04-2026

Copy of the above forwarded to:

1. Principal Secretary to Hon'ble the Chief Justice, High Court of J&K and Ladakh.
2. Director General of Police, Prisons, J&K for kind information and necessary action at the end of concerned Jail authorities.
3. Registrar Vigilance, High Court of J&K and Ladakh for information.
4. Director, J&K Judicial Academy, Jammu.
5. Registrar Rules, High Court of J&K and Ladakh.
6. Registrar Judicial, High Court of J&K and Ladakh, Jammu/Srinagar.
7. Registrar Computers (IT), High Court of J&K and Ladakh.
8. Member Secretary, J&K/Ladakh Legal Services Authority.
9. All Principal District & Sessions Judges, UTs of J&K and Ladakh.
10. CPC, e-courts, High Court of J&K and Ladakh, Jammu for information.
11. Secretary, High Court Legal Services Committee, High Court of J&K and Ladakh.

....for information and necessary action.

12. Secretary to Hon'ble Mr. /Mrs. Justice.....

.....for kind information of their Lordships.

13. Deputy Registrar, Supreme Court Section, High Court of J&K and Ladakh for information.
14. Incharge, NIC, High Court of J&K and Ladakh, Jammu for information and uploading the same on the official website of the High Court.
15. Incharge Library, High Court wing Jammu/Srinagar, for information and keeping the record of the same.
16. Order file.



Registrar General