Press Release dated 26.06.2020

The Central Information Commission (CIC), New Delhi along with Central Information Commissioners, CIC held an interaction with all the State Chief Information Commissioners and State Information Commissioners through Video Conferencing on 26.06.2020 at 4.00 P.M. This interaction is in continuation of the earlier meeting held on 29th April, 2020 with all Chief State Information Commissioners by Sh. Bimal Julka, Chief Information Commissioner, CIC, New Delhi

The basic objective of the interaction was to exchange ideas, methodology and approach to streamline the functioning of the Commission through the use of best technological tools especially during COVID 19 like situation.

The meeting was chaired by Sh. Bimal Julka, Chief Information Commissioner, CIC, New Delhi in the presence of Central Information Commissioners, New Delhi. All the 28 State Information Commissions were invited to participate in the interaction. 19 State Information Commissions were present. While presiding over the meeting, Sh. Bimal Julka, CIC shared his experience in respect of disposal of the cases. It was informed that maximum possible efforts were made with the help of technology for conduct of hearings under the prevailing circumstances arising due to lockdown. Hearings were conducted through audio / video conference and parties were advised to refrain from physical presence to maintain social distance in compliance with the Government guidelines. It was urged that considering the need of the time, out of the box thinking and certain creative and innovative measures had to be initiated in these troubled times so that the information seeker is provided all possible relief under the Right to Information Act which is a common man’s Act. It was also brought out that consequent to the reorganization of Jammu & Kashmir Act, 2019 and transfer of pending complaint & second appeal cases under RTI Act to Central Information Commission, New Delhi, the Commission had initiated the process to get the cases
transferred. The Commission had commenced hearing of cases w.e.f. 15th May, 2020. It was also suggested to UT J & K to register itself with the RTI portal of DoPT so as to facilitate the general public to file online RTI applications and first appeal. Efforts are also being made to facilitate training and familiarization exercise of the CPIOs and First Appellate Authorities of J & K and Ladakh Administration through webinars etc. Besides this, the participants were also briefed about the preventive measures undertaken in the office premises in respect of maintenance of hygiene & sanitation.

Central Information Commissioners, CIC, New Delhi also shared their experiences in respect of hearing of the cases through audio / video conference. All the State Information Commission actively participated in the discussion. It was a very encouraging response from almost all the State Information Commissions in the dealing with the cases through audio / video conference, webinar etc. in the present situation while conveying their gratitude to the Central Information Commission for convening such virtual conferences. It was collectively resolved that such periodic interactions would further strengthen the functioning of the Commissions.

Sh. Bimal Julka, Chief Information Commissioner, CIC thanked the participants.