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News

Kerala Story: Wayanad's Kalpetta becomes India's first fully paperless judicial district; judges to get AI assistance

All courts in the Kalpetta district judiciary in Wayanad will function completely without paper from filing to final orders. The system was developed entirely in-house by the Kerala High Court.

Giti Pratap

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The Kalpetta judicial district in Kerala's Wayanad has become the first entirely paperless district court system in India.

All courts in the district judiciary will function completely without paper from filing to final orders. From the very inception of the case, to the pre-trial stage, recording of evidence, interlocutory proceedings, till final adjudication, every judicial process will be conducted digitally.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) judicial assistance tools have also been integrated into the district court management systems. The system is capable of generating structured case summaries from the digital record, making it easier for judges to glance at the factual and procedural background of cases.

Interactive question-and-answer functions further permit judicial officers to query the system on case-specific aspects. Judges are also empowered to record judicial notes, highlight relevant provisions, and annotate documents directly on the electronic case file.

Voice-to-text technology has been integrated to facilitate accurate transcription of witness depositions and judicial dictation.

Judicial orders and judgments are authenticated using secure digital signatures which confer full legal validity, integrity and authenticity.

The system was developed entirely in-house by the Kerala High Court.

The initiative was announced at an event held at the Kerala High Court on January 6.



CJI Surya Kant and Justice Vikram Nath

Speaking at the event, Chief Justice of India **Surya Kant** highlighted the importance of launching the initiative in a district known for being topographically and ecologically significant to the Western Ghats, terming it a step towards "green jurisprudence".

He also said that the move is a major step towards the democratisation of access to India's legal system.

"Access often depended on one's proximity to the record room or the thickness of one's brief. Today, we democratize that access with the conceptualisation of the in-house district court case management system developed by the High Court of Kerala. And that system completely alleviates the need for any form of physical filing and it provides all stakeholders with real-time access to compute electronic case records of court proceedings. Thus, whether a practitioner is in the heart of Kalpetta or a remote corner of the district, the single source of truth, namely the digital record, is equally available, equally immediate, and equally incorruptible," CJI Kant explained

Supreme Court E-Committee chairperson Justice **Vikram Nath**, said that the Kalpetta model offers a compelling model that can be scaled up and adopted across the country.

"It demonstrates that full-scale digitisation is not only possible at the district level, but achievable through careful planning and institutional commitment. It also reminds us that this is only the beginning. The paperless courts of Kalpetta stand as a powerful testament to how tradition and innovation can coexist harmoniously and purposefully in the service of justice," Justice Nath said.

“ This truly represents the real Kerala story.

- Advocate General K Gopalakrishna Kurup



Chief Justice Nitin Jamdar, Justice AK Jayasankaran Nambiar and Justice Raja Vijayaraghavan V

Kerala High Court Chief Justice **Nitin Jamdar** highlighted the benefits of going paperless for judges, court staff, lawyers, advocate clerks and litigants.

"Cases can now be filed electronically without repeated visits to court office. Files no longer move from table to table or get delayed due to misplaced paper. Another important advantage this digital initiative will bring forth for the litigants is of cost reduction. Less paperwork also means fewer clerical delays and quicker communication of court orders," he said.

Kerala High Court Justice **AK Jayasankaran Nambiar** drew attention to the fact that the in-house development of AI tools has eliminated one of the biggest concerns surrounding AI of late - unreliable source data.

"One of the most significant limitations of an artificial intelligence tool has been demonstrated to be its inability to reproduce satisfactory results owing to a lack of reliable data that is used for machine learning. The world over you have limitations on AI tools and here in this small district in Kerala, we seem to have overcome this global limitation through the use of reliable data that is already captured by the District Court Management System. This initiative demonstrates the capability of systems developed in-house to deliver the expected results without relying on third-party proprietary platforms," Justice Nambiar explained.

In his opening remarks, Kerala High Court judge Justice **Raja Vijayaraghavan V** said that the paperless transformation was achieved through co-operation and consultation with all stakeholders.

"The benefits of the system are already evident from the inputs that we have received from the stakeholders. Some issues have been highlighted, which we will address in quick time," he added.

Both the Secretary of the Bar Council of Kerala Rajkumar KR and President of the Kerala High Court Advocates' Association Peeyus Kottam said that the Bar will continue to co-operate to ensure further digitisation across the State.



Advocate General Gopalakrishna Kurup

Alluding to alternative narratives of Kerala's development which recently found its way to the silver screen, Senior Advocate and Kerala Advocate General **K Gopalakrishna Kurup** said that the launch reflects the true "Kerala Story".

"The District Judiciary of Wayanad, the plateau district nestled in the heights of the Western Ghats, with more than four-fifths of its geographical area under forest cover, is steadily becoming a paperless in its functioning. This truly represents the real Kerala story. It is indeed a momentous occasion in the continuing path-breaking IT initiatives of the High Court of Kerala, spearheaded by its dedicated in-house IT team, ably guided by a visionary Chief Justice and a group of tech-savvy judges, and supported unstintingly by the

development-oriented state government through robust financial and infrastructural backing," AG Kurup said.

State Law Minister P Rajeev said that the responsibility of ensuring citizens are capable of benefitting from such digitisation efforts, lies not with the judiciary but with the government. The Kerala government has taken several steps to ensure the same, he said.

"Kerala is the only State in India which is the fully digitally literate state. And also we have declared access to internet is a basic right of the citizen. We have taken several steps to emancipate the common man to address these new issues of the digital era. We are trying to go ahead of the country," he said.

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Abhishek Bharti

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The image is a promotional graphic for the partnership between National Law Institute University (NLIU) Bhopal and Mindpeers. At the top, there are three logos: the NLIU crest on the left, the NLIU seal in the center, and the Mindpeers logo on the right. Below the logos, the text reads "National Law Institute University, Bhopal Partners With MindPeers". Underneath this, it says "To Provide Comprehensive Mental-Health Support to Students". The bottom half of the image features a stylized illustration of three people (two men and one woman) sitting outdoors among green plants and trees, engaged in conversation.

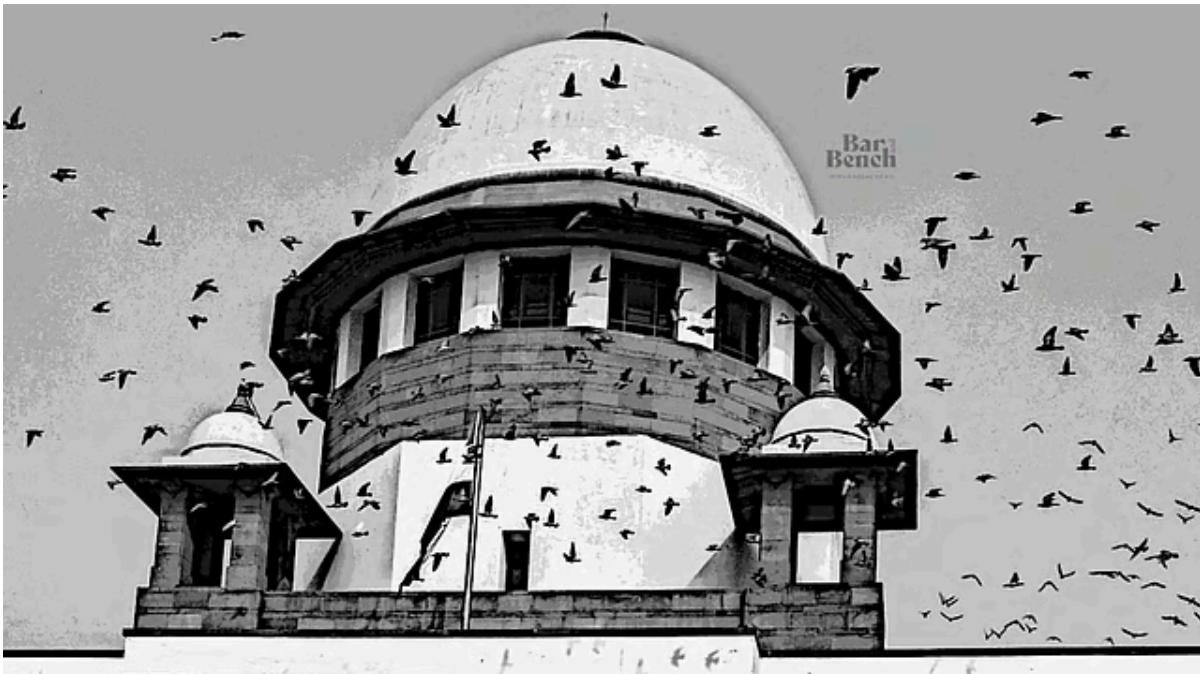
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Abhishek Bharti

Corporate & In-House News

Abhishek Bharti appointed Regional General Counsel of Danaher Corporation

Before this move, Bharti was General Counsel at GE Aerospace, a role he assumed in April 2023 and held until his transition.

Bar & Bench

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National Law School of India University (NLSIU) alumnus Abhishek Bharti has been appointed Regional General Counsel at Danaher Corporation, India, marking his transition from GE Aerospace.

Before this move, Bharti was General Counsel at GE Aerospace, a role he assumed in April 2023 and held until his transition. He was based in Bengaluru, overseeing legal affairs for the aerospace business.

Speaking to Bar & Bench about the move, Bharti said,

"Danaher Corporation has a strong legacy of integrity, innovation, and operational excellence, and I am excited to be part of this journey. The organization brings together world class businesses and highly accomplished legal and compliance teams, and I look forward to contributing meaningfully as Regional General Counsel. I am grateful for the trust and confidence placed in me, and I am committed to supporting Danaher's growth while upholding the highest standards of governance and ethics."

Prior to GE Aerospace, Bharti spent over five years at GE Research in India. He served as General Counsel from May 2022 to April 2023, and earlier as Senior Counsel, Legal Affairs and Government Relations from March 2018 to May 2022, where he handled government-level interactions and supported GE's research and development operations in India on litigation and legal advisory matters.

Between 2015 and 2018, Bharti worked as an International Civil Servant with the International Anti-Corruption Academy in Vienna, engaging with initiatives involving UNODC, the European Union, and Interpol, with a focus on compliance and international civil services.

Earlier in his career, Bharti served as Compliance Counsel (India) at TE Connectivity from December 2013 to November 2015, and before that as Lead Counsel at GE Healthcare from March 2011 to December 2013, advising on commercial contracts, mergers and acquisitions, competition law, and compliance matters. He began his professional career at GlaxoSmithKline India Ltd, where he worked as an Assistant Manager and Compliance Officer from 2006 to 2009.

Bharti holds a B.A., LL.B. degree from the National Law School of India University (NLSIU), Bengaluru. He went on to complete his LL.M. in International Law from The

Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University, USA. He has additionally worked as a Research Assistant to Professor Antonia Handler Chayes at Harvard University and the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy.

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