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KARNATAKA JUDICIARY GETS APEX COURT PAT

Lok Adalat settled record number of property disputes in Dec last year

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THE Supreme Court has lauded the Karnataka judiciary for resolving a record number of partition suits (property disputes) on a single day, at the mega Lok Adalat held at the end of last year.

Briefing the media on Wednesday on the upcoming mega Lok Adalat to be held on Saturday, Justice Aravind Kumar, Executive Chairman, Karnataka State Legal Services Authority (KSLSA), said, "When we met recently, Chief Justice of India S R Bobde appreciated KSLSA for resolving a record number of 3,093 partition suits out of 2.63 lakh cases, settled at the one-day mega Lok Adalat on December 19, 2020. Normally, on an average, 20 to 25 property dispute cases are settled

during a single Lok Adalat, with a maximum of 42."

Justice Kumar, who is also a judge of the Karnataka High Court, noted that around 60,000 property dispute cases are pending in the state, and said they are making all efforts to increase the settlement of partition suits in Lok Adalats. "By resolving 2.63 lakh cases at the Lok Adalat in December last year, we saved Rs 144.77 crore, which would otherwise have to be spent towards salaries of judges and staffers, as well as other incidental expenses, if those cases were tried in court. Karnataka is the first state in the country to achieve this," the judge said.

He also said that they have contributed Rs 41.59 crore to the state exchequer through collection of penalties and compounding of fines among others, by settling compoundable

cases at the Lok Adalat, that too during the pandemic. "In fact, if those cases are tried in court, it would take five-six years to get that much revenue," Justice Kumar pointed out.

Giving an example of the burden on the state government, Justice Kumar said the state now has to pay Rs 23 lakh to a land owner for acquiring 23 guntas of land in 1993, for which Rs 83,000 was awarded earlier. Due to disputes, the state has to pay over Rs 2,000 crore to land owners in such cases. After identifying such cases and apprising the state on the matter, the government has already released Rs 1,200 crore to settle the claims in the ensuing Lok Adalat, he said.

Meanwhile, former Lokayukta Justice Santosh Hegde will inaugurate the mega Lok Adalat on Saturday.