Cabinet approves continuation of the Centrally Sponsored Scheme for Fast Track Special Courts (FTSCs) for expeditious trial of cases of rape and POCSO (Protection of Children from Sexual Offences) Act for a further period of five years (FY 2026-27 to FY 2030-31)

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The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister, has approved the continuation of the Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) for Fast Track Special Courts (FTSCs), including exclusive POCSO Courts, for a further period of five years i.e. from 01.04.2026 to 31.03.2031. The Scheme has a total financial outlay of Rs.3,788.04 crore (Central Share of Rs.2,353.15 crore and State/UT Share of Rs.1,434.89 crore). The Central Share will be funded from the Nirbhaya Fund.

The major features of the approved Scheme are as follows:

1. Continuation of the Scheme for five years i.e. from 01.04.2026 to 31.03.2031.
2. The Scheme has provision of operationalisation of 850 Fast Track Special Courts (FTSCs), including exclusive POCSO Courts, across various participating States/Union Territories.
3. Provision of dedicated Judicial Officer, Special Public Prosecutor and 6 support staff to facilitate expeditious disposal of pending cases relating to rape and offences under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012.
4. Provision of financial assistance to participating States/UTs for meeting the operational expenditure of FTSCs, in accordance with the CSS funding pattern.

Major impact:

The continuation of the Scheme is expected to have the following major impacts:

- **Providing Speedy Justice:** Ensuring faster trials and timely justice for victims of sexual offences.
- **Reducing Pending Cases:** Reducing the number of pending cases of Rape and POCSO Act cases.

- **Child-Friendly and Victim-Centric Environment:** The Scheme encourages establishment of Vulnerable Witness Deposition Centres (VWDCs) and child-friendly court spaces to facilitate victim testimonies without causing further distress.
- **Reduced inequality:** By prioritizing cases involving vulnerable groups (women and children), the scheme intends to reduce inequalities in access to justice.

Implementation strategy and targets:

The Scheme shall be implemented by the Department of Justice in coordination with the respective State Governments and UT Administrations. The key implementation strategies and targets are as follows:

1. **Expansion of Fast Track Special Courts (FTSCs):** Provision of expansion of FTSCs from the current 779 to 850 so that the coverage can extend in additional districts. This expansion shall be on the basis of case pendency data across all States and Union Territories.
2. **Dedicated Legal Support:** Introduction of a specialized Special Public Prosecutor assigned exclusively to each FTSC to ensure speedy trials.
3. **Optimized Court Staffing:** Allocation of one Judicial Officer and six support staff per FTSC to streamline administrative workload and facilitate expeditious disposal of old cases**.**
4. **Financial assistance:** Central assistance shall be provided to participating States/UTs in accordance with the approved funding pattern and prescribed guidelines.
5. **Monitoring and evaluation:** The Department of Justice shall monitor the performance of FTSCs through the FTSC Dashboard, periodic progress reports, Expenditure Statements of the State. The Department shall also hold consultations with High Courts and State Governments and take their feedback for effective implementation of the Scheme.
6. **Performance targets:** The Scheme aims to improve the rate of disposal of pending rape and POCSO Act cases, reduce case pendency and facilitate time-bound trials.

The primary beneficiaries of the Scheme are women and children who are victims of rape and offences under the POCSO Act, 2012.

The Scheme is proposed to be expanded to cover up to 850 FTSCs. This expansion is intended to include additional districts, which shall be identified on the basis of the pendency of rape and POCSO Act cases.

Background:

This Scheme has been operational since 02.10.2019. It has undergone successive extensions to ensure continuity of dedicated fast track courts for the expeditious disposal of rape and POCSO Act cases. The status of the Scheme is as follows:

Particulars	
Date of launch	02.10.2019
Participating States/UTs	29

Total functional FTSCs including exclusive POCSO Courts	779 including 399 exclusive POCSO Courts
Total cases disposed of since inception of the Scheme	4,02,457
Proposed number of FTSCs under the extended Scheme	850
Approved continuation period	2026. to 31.03.2031

The Scheme has contributed to strengthening the judicial response to the crime of sexual offences by providing dedicated courts for the disposal of rape and POCSO Act cases. The Department of Justice regularly monitors the functioning of FTSCs through the FTSC Dashboard, periodic data collection from High Courts and review meetings with concerned stakeholders. The continuation of the Scheme for another five years is expected to further strengthen the institutional capacity of the judiciary, reduce pendency of sexual offence cases and ensure timely justice to victims, particularly women and children.

The Centrally Sponsored Scheme for Fast Track Special Courts was launched on 02.10.2019 in pursuance of the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2018, and in compliance to the directions of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India dated 25.07.2019 in Suo Motu Writ (Criminal) No. 1/2019. The Hon'ble Supreme Court had directed for establishment of exclusive Special Courts in districts having more than 100 pending cases under the POCSO Act, 2012.

Accordingly, the Central Government launched the Scheme for establishing dedicated FTSCs, including exclusive POCSO Courts. The emphasis was on the time-bound disposal of pending cases relating to rape and offences under the POCSO Act, 2012.

The Scheme was initially launched for a period of one year and was subsequently extended up to 31.03.2026. The present approval ensures continuation of the Scheme for a further period of five years, i.e. up to 31.03.2031.

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