
IP Appellate Board embraces Digital India Initiative

It has been now over 2 months that the Chairman of Intellectual Property Appellate Board (IPAB) retired in May 2016, the position is yet to be filled and as a result no hearings have been appointed adding to further delay in disposal of cases. In the meanwhile, the government through the Ministry of Commerce and Industry has expressed its intention to '*Modernize and Strengthen*' the IPAB. The ministry has announced that they have sanctioned a cost of Rs. 147 million (approx US \$ 2.21 million) for the construction of a permanent office/building for IPAB in Chennai (which is currently working from a rented premises in Teynampet in Chennai) and upgrade its infrastructure facilities. The press report also suggests appointment of the Chairman and the Technical Member for Patents is under active consideration.

IPAB revamps its website and move towards digitization of records

In the meanwhile, IPAB in order to provide easy access to information of pending cases has revamped its website with search features to check the status of a case based on case number, parties name or counsel's/advocate's name. It has also been announced by IPAB that they intend to start online filing of applications, inspection of documents and make available certified copies through online platform.

To kick-start the digitization drive, IPAB has also issued a notification informing that going forward all paper filing of Applications, Miscellaneous Applications, Appeals, and Rectification Applications must accompany a soft copy on CD-R/DVD-R. Hopefully this will be a time gap arrangement until the online filing is rolled out.

On the whole the proposed changes are welcome steps and keeping pace with Digital India initiative of Indian government.

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