

SUPREME COURT OF INDIA

New Delhi, dated March 23, 2020

CIRCULAR

In furtherance of the steps already taken to contain the spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19), considering the lockdown declared by the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi and the suggestions of the Bar Associations, Hon'ble the Chief Justice of India has been pleased to direct, as follows :-

1. The entry into the High Security Zone be further regulated by suspending entry of Learned Advocates on the basis of their proximity cards, till further orders;
2. The Advocates having offices/chambers in the various Lawyers Chamber Blocks situated in the Supreme Court may be advised against attending their respective offices/chambers, as they would require to be closed due to lack of cleaning and conservancy services, in light of the steps taken pursuant to the Government notification, as aforesaid;
3. The Hon'ble Bench(es) may be constituted to hear only matters involving extreme urgency, to be decided by the Hon'ble Presiding Judge of such Bench(es) on the basis of prayer made by Advocate-on-Record/party-in-person by way of a signed and verified application containing a synopsis of extreme urgency not exceeding one page, similar to urgency affidavit filed during Court Vacation periods. The said application shall be submitted only by e-mail sent to mention.sc@sci.nic.in latest by 2:00 pm on the day preceding the day of the sitting of the Hon'ble Bench. The application must *inter-alia* clearly contain the case-details, contact-details of the AOR/party in-person including e-mail id, mobile number and alternate number(s), camp/office address with Pin Code and Police Station, together with a prayer for exemption from filing duly affirmed affidavit in the prevailing circumstances with an undertaking that deficit court fees will be paid subsequently. The application must also contain a separate paragraph giving consent that the matter may be taken up through the Video-Conferencing mode. In the application, the AOR/Party-in-Person must specify as to whether he would link through own desktop/mobile or would prefer to appear at such facility in the Supreme Court premises;
4. For the purpose of video-conferencing, the app 'Vidyo' may be downloaded on personal desktop/laptop/mobile device by clicking download link available on <http://ecourtvc.nic.in>. The "Vidyo" application can also be downloaded from Google Play Store for Android phone and from Apple Store for iOS phone. The AOR/Party-in-Person may refer to Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) uploaded on the website of the Supreme Court i.e. www.sci.gov.in, for assistance in this regard;

5. Upon approval of the urgency by the Hon'ble Presiding Judge of the Bench, the case(s) would be enlisted in the cause-list to be published on the website by evening hours on the day preceding the sitting of the Bench; in case the application praying for listing on grounds of extreme urgency is not allowed, the AOR would be permitted to make oral mentioning before the Hon'ble Presiding Judge, over the landline phone at His Lordship's residential office strictly between 10:30 am and 11:00 am on the day of the hearing; if upon such mentioning, the matter is allowed, the same would be listed as per directions of Hon'ble Judge. The list of telephone numbers of the Hon'ble Judges is available on the website of the Supreme Court of India i.e. www.sci.gov.in.
6. In all cases taken on the board, an intimation regarding time of sitting of the Hon'ble Bench and approximate time of the hearing of their case(s) shall be sent to the concerned AOR/Party-in-Person on the Mobile Number and e-mail as mentioned in the application. The concerned AOR/Party-in-Person would also be provided one-time link for such hearing, that would facilitate their participation in the hearing of the case as and when the same is conducted by the Hon'ble Bench. It is, therefore, desired that the AOR/Party-in-Person must keep his mobile free around the time indicated, as the Supreme Court Registry will call on the mobile number mentioned in their application when the matter is to be called for hearing through video-conferencing, as per cause-list;
7. If the Advocate/Party-in-Person is unable to connect through video-conferencing due to non-availability of hardware/network on any given date, the matter would be listed on the next date of the sitting of any Bench and the AOR/Party-in-Person may appear through Video-Conferencing facility being made available in the Supreme Court premises. The Advocate/Party-in-Person may avail the facility of video-conference by approaching the video-conference room by indicating in the application their desire to do so.
8. With a view to streamline the access to members of the Press, the Deputy Registrar(Public Relations Officer) may permit only 3 media persons to remain inside the Video-Conference Room, whenever the Hon'ble Bench may sit to take up extreme urgent matters, till further orders;
9. The President & the Secretary of the SCBA & SCAORA may authorise entry of any Advocate into the High Security Zone, by communication on their letter head, scanned and sent to the Registrar (AG) at admn.gen@sci.nic.in one day ahead of the requested time of entry, specifying the area of visit within High Security Zone and the purpose thereof;
10. The Registry would act only upon such e-mails as are sent to the mail-ids as specified above, and reply would be sent, as may be required, to the same email id from where the request would have come. Hence, AOR/Party-in-Person are requested not to send such e-mails to any other mail ids.

11. The Registry would keep only such offices open with skeletal staff as may be required to facilitate the holding of the Hon'ble Bench for extreme urgent cases or as directed from time to time, and for facilitating all matters that may be connected to smoothly holding of such Hon'ble Bench, by video-conferencing or otherwise;

Sd/-
[SANJEEV S. KALGAONKAR]
SECRETARY GENERAL

Copy to :

All concerned.