

<b>Judge Name</b>	<b>Case No/Year</b>	<b>Date of Order</b>	<b>Daily Order</b>
CHIEF JUSTICE AND SURAJ GOVINDARAJ	WP 7338/2020	30/06/2021	<p>The learned Amicus Curiae has submitted written submissions pointing out the difficulties faced by the District and Trial Courts in video conference hearing.</p>

2. A response of the Registrar General was called for. In the response of the Registrar General, it is mentioned that a decision to install Hybrid video conference system (a system which is suitable for hybrid system of hearing which gives an option to the members of the Bar to attend hearing either physically or through video conference) in all the District Courts has been taken by the High Court. He has also noted that the JITSI application which is used in the District and Trial Courts requires little more bandwidth than the applications like Zoom. He has pointed out that unless the users of the application, such as, advocates and litigants participate in the video conference hearing from the area where there is a good signal strength of internet, the technical glitches are bound to take place when JITSI application is used. Therefore, a suggestion has been incorporated by him to work out the issues which are faced by the users of JITSI application. He has suggested that it is necessary for all the Courts to subscribe to the licensed version of Zoom application which is used by the High Court.

3. Therefore, there is a need to provide a proper Hybrid video conference hearing system in all the District and Trial Courts in the State on par with what is provided in the High Court. Due to the first and second waves of COVID-19, the functioning of the District and Trial Courts was badly affected and in fact, the lockdown has resulted in creation of arrears. There are deliberations going on about possibility of third wave of COVID-19 and therefore, as observed by this court in the earlier orders, now the judicial system in the State has to be in the state of preparedness to face the third wave of COVID-19. Therefore, there cannot be any dispute that all the Courts in the State should have a proper Hybrid video conference system in the place.

4. Apart from that, all the Courts must be provided with a licenced Zoom application which is being successfully used in the High Court of Karnataka at the principal seat and Benches.

5. For providing Hybrid video conference hearing system and the licenced version of Zoom application, priorities will have to be fixed. During the course of hearing, it transpired that priority will be given to all the Courts of the Principal District Judges, all the Sessions Courts, and all the Courts of

<b>Judge Name</b>	<b>Case No/Year</b>	<b>Date of Order</b>	<b>Daily Order</b>
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Civil Judges taking up criminal matters. Similarly, priority will have to be given to the Family Courts and Commercial Court establishments in the entire State, especially dedicated to the Commercial Courts established in Bengaluru. A suggestion has been made across at the Bar that till all the Courts are provided with proper Hybrid video conference system, at least in one court hall in every court complex (preferably a vacant court Hall), a video conference system which is similar to the one used in the High Court with licenced version of Zoom application be provided which could be used by all the Courts turn by turn. Therefore, it will be appropriate if the Computer Committee of the High Court prepares an exhaustive proposal for providing proper Hybrid video conference system in all the Courts in the State along with a supply of a licenced version of Zoom application. The Computer Committee can always lay down priorities considering what we have observed above.

6. The City of Bengaluru is known as a Silicon Valley of India. Therefore, the best possible video conference system should be provided for the benefit of all the Courts in the State. The State and High Court should ensure that the best possible infrastructure to hold video conference hearings is provided to all the Courts in Karnataka, so that, the Courts in Karnataka can become a role model for the Court in other States. We are sure that the State Government will immediately consider the proposal submitted by the High Court administration. The Registrar General to place on record a copy of the proposal submitted by the High Court administration, so that proper directions can be issued in this petition.

7. Now, we are dealing with the issue of service of notice to various Public Sector Corporations.

8. The learned counsel appearing for Bengaluru Electricity Supply Company Limited states that hard copies of appeals/petitions/applications filed in the High Court will be accepted at the office address provided by him and soft copies will be accepted through email ID provided by him. The address and email-ID are as under:

Deputy General Manager-DGM Legal

Legal Section, BESCOM Corporate Office

K.R.Circle

<b>Judge Name</b>	<b>Case No/Year</b>	<b>Date of Order</b>	<b>Daily Order</b>
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Bangalore-560 001

Mobile No.94498 77555

Email ID:legalsectionbescome@gmail.com

9. The learned counsel appearing for Karnataka Industrial Area Development Board states that copies in the physical form of appeals/petitions/applications filed in the High Court will be accepted at the address given by him. He states that there are two e-mail IDs created for accepting the service of soft copies of the cases filed in the High Court. The address of email-IDs are as under:

Legal Adviser - KIADB, Head Office, 4th floor

Khanija Bhavan, Race Course Road

Bangalore - 560 001

Email ID :la@kiadb.in

Legal Officer - KIADB, Head Office, 5th Floor

Khanija Bhavan, Race Course Road

Bangalore - 560 001

Email ID :lawofficer@kiadb.in

10. The learned counsel appearing for the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) states that it will take some time for BBMP to make a provision for accepting soft copies. However, he states that copies of the cases filed in the physical form will be accepted at the following address:

Office of the head of the Legal Cell

Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike

N R Square

Judge Name	Case No/Year	Date of Order	Daily Order
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Bengaluru

11. We, therefore, direct that :

(i) In all the appeals/petitions/applications filed in the High Court, where the Bengaluru Electricity Supply Company Limited, Karnataka Industrial Area Development Board and BBMP are parties or where their officers are made parties in their official capacity, it will be open for the members of the Bar and parties in person to serve copies of the cases filed in the High Court in the physical form at the address mentioned above in paragraph 8 and/or soft copies at the email-IDs mentioned above;

(ii) However, copies shall be served in the physical form or in the soft form along with a covering letter of the advocate and/or party in person stating FR number or case number of the case. If service is effected in the above manner by providing either FR number or case number, the concerned authorities shall ensure that their respective advocates appear before the Court and as when the cases are listed before the Court;

(iii) Bengaluru Electricity Supply Company Limited, Karnataka Industrial Area Development Board and BBMP shall ensure that if the service of the copies of appeals/petitions/applications is made in the aforesaid manner, the cases will be immediately entrusted to the panel advocate/standing counsel so that the authorities or the officers who are made parties in their official capacity, can immediately appear before the Court through the panel advocate/standing counsel;

(iv) We make it clear that the service of hard copies or soft copies shall be made only during the office working hours of the aforesaid corporations; and

(v) We also make it clear that the Corporations are bound to appear before the Court provided service is effected 48 hours in advance (excluding holidays).

12. We propose to pass similar orders in relation to other Public Sector Corporations. We request the counsel representing the other Public Sector Corporations to provide the necessary details to the learned Additional Advocate General so that, compilation of data be placed before the Court.

Judge Name	Case No/Year	Date of Order	Daily Order
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13. Apart from the issue which is highlighted earlier, this Court will have to go into the other issue of rectification of office objections.

List the petition for further hearing on 12th July 2021.