

MEETING OF FULL COURT BY CIRCULATION

This case relates to review the present system of hearing in this Court and to consider further extension of such existing arrangement of hearing of matters by the High Court of Delhi beyond 30.11.2020.

In this regard, it is submitted that the Administrative and General Supervision Committee, in its meeting held on 23.03.2020, having considered the steps already taken by this Court to combat the impending threat of coronavirus (2019-nCoV) and considering the prevalent situation, particularly in view of the lockdown declared by the Government in the National Capital Territory of Delhi upto 31.03.2020 and in view of request of Bar Associations for complete closure of the Courts, had resolved that the functioning of this Court as well the Courts subordinate thereto be suspended till 04.04.2020. Office Order No.373/Estt/E-1/ DHC dated 23.03.2020 was accordingly issued.

Thereafter, vide Order dated 24.03.2020, the Government of India declared nationwide lockdown for a period of 21 days w.e.f. 25.03.2020 and in the given circumstances, vide orders dated 25.03.2020, Hon'ble the Chief Justice was pleased to direct that the functioning of this Court and the Courts subordinate thereto shall remain suspended till 15.04.2020 with further direction that the order of closure of High Court of Delhi and the Courts subordinate thereto, issued vide Office Order dated 23.03.2020 shall stand extended till 15.04.2020 and that the District and Sessions Judges concerned may permit the Judges and other staff officials to work from home wherever possible. It was further directed that all the pending matters listed before this Court (including the courts of Registrars and Joint Registrars) on 13.04.2020 to 15.04.2020 would be adjourned to specified *en bloc* dates. Notice to the above effect was also ordered to be uploaded on the website of this Court so that no litigant or advocate is inconvenienced.

It is further submitted that the Full Court vide its resolution, by circulation, in view of the severe hardship faced by the litigants due to the prevailing pandemic of COVID 19 that has impaired the functioning of the courts, unanimously resolved that to make up for the loss of court working hours and to ensure restoration of normalcy in the functioning of the courts at the earliest, in modification of the resolution of the Full Court dated 16.09.2019, declaring the period of the Summer vacations for this Court and the Courts subordinate thereto in the month of June 2020,

this Court and courts subordinate thereto resolved to continue functioning during the entire month of June i.e. from 01.06.2020 to 30.06.2020.

Thereafter, vide Order dated 14.04.2020, the Government of India declared further extension of nationwide lockdown upto 03.05.2020. The Administrative and General Supervision Committee of High Court of Delhi vide its meeting held by circulation resolved that the order of suspended functioning of High Court of Delhi and the Courts subordinate thereto, issued vide Office Orders dated 23.03.2020 and 25.03.2020 shall stand extended till 03.05.2020 on the same terms and that all the pending matters listed before this Court (including the courts of Registrars and Joint Registrars) from 16.04.2020 to 02.05.2020 were directed to be adjourned to the subsequent dates.

Thereafter, the Administrative and General Supervision Committee held meetings from time to time to review the situation and the suspended functioning of High Court of Delhi and the Courts subordinate thereto was accordingly extended. In terms of such resolutions of the Administrative and General Supervision Committee, the Office Orders were issued on 15.04.2020, 02.05.2020, 16.05.2020, 21.05.2020, 29.05.2020, 13.06.2020, 29.06.2020, 13.07.2020, 30.07.2020, 15.08.2020 were issued.

The Administrative and General Supervision Committee, in its last meeting held by circulation also resolved that subject to complete availability of public transport and subject to the situation in Delhi remaining stable, a plan be evolved for gradual opening of physical courts from the 1st September, 2020 onwards. It also resolved that to begin with, on experimental basis, around one-fourth of the courts could resume physical functioning on a rotational basis while the rest can continue taking up matters through videoconferencing. The District and Sessions Judge (HQs), in consultation with the other District and Sessions Judges, was asked to prepare a comprehensive plan on the above lines and to forward the same to this Court by 20.08.2020 for being placed before the "*Committee for Preparation of Graded Action Plan*" and thereafter before the Full Court for consideration. A similar plan was directed to be prepared by the Registrar General for functioning of the Benches of this Court and was directed to be also placed for consideration in the similar manner.

The “Committee for Preparation of Graded Action Plan” in its meeting held on 23.08.2020, *inter alia*, considered the comprehensive plans/SOPs as prepared by the Registrar General for functioning of this Court and by the District and Sessions Judge (HQs), in consultation with the other District and Sessions Judges for the Courts subordinate to this court. After consideration of the above, the said Committee resolved to accept the SOP for Physical Functioning of Delhi High Court w.e.f. 1st September and SOP for Delhi District Courts. It was also resolved that the above-mentioned SOPs and also the suggestions received from Hon’ble Judges of this Court and report regarding jurisdiction best-suited for resumption of physical hearing sent by Honorary Secretary, Delhi High Court Bar Association be placed before the Full Court.

It is further submitted that the Hon’ble Full Court in its meeting held on 25.08.2020 approved the SOP for physical functioning of the High Court and the Courts subordinate to this Court, as recommended by the “Committee for Preparation of Graded Action Plan” with certain modifications and in view of the persisting situation of the pandemic of coronavirus (2019-nCoV) in the NCT of Delhi, resolved to extend the suspended functioning of the High Court of Delhi (except for the Court of Registrars/Joint Registrars) till 30.09.2020. The Full Court also ordered that five Benches of this Court, on rotational basis, shall start holding physical hearing of cases, as per the approved SOP, w.e.f. 01.09.2020 while the remaining Benches shall continue taking up matters through video conferencing. All the pending matters listed before this Court from 01.09.2020 to 30.09.2020 were ordered to be adjourned. It was also resolved by the Full Court that the Courts of Registrars and Joint Registrars of this Court shall continue to take up the matters through videoconferencing, where the files were already scanned and that the evidence be recorded in *ex-parte* and uncontested matters where the same was required to be tendered by way of affidavit. The District and Sessions Judges and Principal Judge (Family Court) (HQs) were directed to prepare roster of the courts in terms of SOP, to be made effective from 01.09.2020. Office Order dated 27.08.2020 was accordingly issued.

The Full Court reviewed the status of physical functioning of this Court on 10.09.2020 and after considering the data submitted by the Registry resolved that suitable number of Benches, for physical hearing, be constituted w.e.f. 15.09.2020. Thereafter, in view of the fact that the Roster of sitting of three Benches of this Court

was prepared upto 08.10.2020 whereas the matters listed upto 30.09.2020 were ordered to be adjourned *en bloc* by the Hon'ble Full Court, the matter was placed before Hon'ble the Chief Justice for consideration and Hon'ble the Chief Justice approved, inter alia, that the cases listed before this Court from 01.10.2020 to 08.10.2020 may be adjourned *en bloc* as per the proposed dates.

The matter was lastly considered by Hon'ble the Full Court in the meeting held on 07.10.2020 when it was resolved that the present system of hearing the matters before this Court shall continue upto 30.11.2020. It was also resolved by Hon'ble the Full Court that the cases instituted in the years 2018, 2019 and 2020 shall also be taken up, as per roster, w.e.f. 17.11.2020. Accordingly, the cases already listed before this Court were ordered to be adjourned *en bloc* as indicated in the said resolution and the schedule was directed to be published on the website of this Court in a phased manner. It was also resolved that w.e.f. 12th October, 2020 two courts of Joint Registrars (Judicial) shall take up the matters through physical mode while the others shall continue to hold courts through videoconferencing as per roster to be notified on the website. All the courts of Joint Registrars (Judicial) were also directed to record evidence in cases involving urgency or where any direction for expeditious/time bound disposal had been received from this Court or the Supreme Court. Office orders dated 08.10.2020 and dated 10.11.2020 were accordingly issued.

As ordered, the matter relating to review the existing system of hearing in this Court and to consider further extension of such arrangement of hearing of matters by the High Court of Delhi beyond 30.11.2020 is placed before the Hon'ble Full Court, by circulation, for consideration and orders.

(Manoj Jain)
Registrar General
18.11.2020

“Considered. In view of the escalating situation of the pandemic of coronavirus (2019-nCOV) in the NCT of Delhi, it is resolved that the present system of hearing the matters before this Court shall continue upto 16.01.2021. All the pending routine/ non-urgent matters listed before this Court from 01.12.2020 to 16.01.2021 be adjourned *en bloc* to the following dates: -

S No	Date already fixed	New Date of Hearing
1	01.12.2020 (Tuesday)	01.02.2021 (Monday)
2.	02.12.2020 (Wednesday)	02.02.2021 (Tuesday)
3.	03.12.2020 (Thursday)	03.02.2021 (Wednesday)
4.	04.12.2020 (Friday)	04.02.2021 (Thursday)
5.	05.12.2020 (Saturday)	06.02.2021 (Saturday)
6.	07.12.2020 (Monday)	05.02.2021 (Friday)
7.	08.12.2020 (Tuesday)	08.02.2021 (Monday)
8.	09.12.2020 (Wednesday)	09.02.2021 (Tuesday)
9.	10.12.2020 (Thursday)	10.02.2021 (Wednesday)
10.	11.12.2020 (Friday)	11.02.2021 (Thursday)
11	14.12.2020 (Monday)	12.02.2021 (Friday)
12	15.12.2020 (Tuesday)	15.02.2021 (Monday)
13	16.12.2020 (Wednesday)	16.02.2021 (Tuesday)
14	17.12.2020 (Thursday)	17.02.2021 (Wednesday)
15	18.12.2020 (Friday)	18.02.2021 (Thursday)
16	19.12.2020 (Saturday)	20.02.2021 (Saturday)
17	21.12.2020 (Monday)	19.02.2021 (Friday)
18	22.12.2020 (Tuesday)	22.02.2021 (Monday)
19	23.12.2020 (Wednesday)	23.02.2021 (Tuesday)
20	24.12.2020 (Thursday)	24.02.2021 (Wednesday)
21	04.01.2021 (Monday)	25.02.2021 (Thursday)
22	05.01.2021 (Tuesday)	26.02.2021 (Friday)
23	06.01.2021 (Wednesday)	01.03.2021 (Monday)
24	07.01.2021 (Thursday)	02.03.2021 (Tuesday)
25	08.01.2021 (Friday)	03.03.2021 (Wednesday)
26	11.01.2021 (Monday)	04.03.2021 (Thursday)
27	12.01.2021 (Tuesday)	05.03.2021 (Friday)
28	13.01.2021 (Wednesday)	08.03.2021 (Monday)
29	14.01.2021 (Thursday)	09.03.2021 (Tuesday)
30	15.01.2021 (Friday)	10.03.2021 (Wednesday)
31	16.01.2021 (Saturday)	20.03.2021 (Saturday)

However, as already directed, it is clarified that the cases instituted in this Court between 01.01.2018 and 21.03.2020 shall not be taken up by the Benches hearing matters in physical mode and such matters shall be adjourned “en bloc” by the Court Masters as per the aforesaid table. The Courts of Registrars and Joint Registrar (Judicial) shall continue to take up the matters as per the existing arrangement.”

Hon’ble Mr. Justice D.N. Patel, Chief Justice

Hon’ble Ms. Justice Hima Kohli

Hon'ble Mr. Justice Vipin Sanghi

Hon'ble Mr. Justice Siddharth Mridul

Hon'ble Mr. Justice Manmohan

Hon'ble Mr. Justice Rajiv Sahai Endlaw

Hon'ble Mr. Justice J.R. Midha

Hon'ble Mr. Justice Rajiv Shakdher
Hon'ble Mr. Justice Suresh Kumar Kait
Hon'ble Ms. Justice Mukta Gupta
Hon'ble Mr. Justice Jayant Nath
Hon'ble Mr. Justice Najmi Waziri
Hon'ble Mr. Justice Sanjeev Sachdeva
Hon'ble Mr. Justice Vibhu Bakhru
Hon'ble Mr. Justice V. Kameswar Rao
Hon'ble Ms. Justice Anu Malhotra
Hon'ble Mr. Justice Yogesh Khanna
Hon'ble Ms. Justice Rekha Palli
Hon'ble Ms. Justice Prathiba M. Singh
Hon'ble Mr. Justice Navin Chawla
Hon'ble Mr. Justice C. Hari Shankar
Hon'ble Mr. Justice Subramonium Prasad
Hon'ble Ms. Justice Jyoti Singh
Hon'ble Mr. Justice Prateek Jalan
Hon'ble Mr. Justice Anup Jairam Bhambhani
Hon'ble Mr. Justice Sanjeev Narula
Hon'ble Mr. Justice Manoj Kumar Ohri
Hon'ble Mr. Justice Talwant Singh
Hon'ble Mr. Justice Rajnish Bhatnagar
Hon'ble Ms. Justice Asha Menon
Hon'ble Mr. Justice Brijesh Sethi