

**HIGH COURT OF DELHI: NEW DELHI**

**THROUGH E-MAIL ONLY**

No. 356/RG/DHC/2020

Dated: 16.08.2020

From

Manoj Jain  
Registrar General,  
Delhi High Court,  
New Delhi

To

1. The Chairman/ Hony. Secretary,  
Bar Council of Delhi,  
1-F, Lawyers Chambers,  
Delhi High Court.
2. The President/Secretary,  
Delhi High Court Bar Association,  
Delhi High Court,  
New Delhi.
3. Chairman/ Secretary General  
Coordination Committee all Districts Courts Bar Associations of Delhi  
Dwarka Courts Complex,  
New Delhi.
4. The President/Secretary,  
Delhi Bar Association,  
Tis Hazari Court Complex,  
Tis Hazari.
5. The President/Secretary,  
New Delhi Bar Association,  
Patiala House Court complex,  
New Delhi.
6. The President/Secretary,  
Shahdara Bar Association,  
Karkardooma Court Complex,  
Delhi.

7. The President/Secretary,  
Rohini Court Bar Association,  
Rohini Court Complex,  
Delhi.
8. The President/Secretary,  
Dwarka Court Bar Association,  
Dwarka Courts Complex,  
New Delhi.
9. The President/Secretary,  
Saket Court Bar Association,  
Saket Court Complex,  
New Delhi.

Dear Sir,

I have been directed by Hon'ble the Chief Justice of the Delhi High Court to address this communication to you.

On account of the widespread Covid-19 pandemic, which has seriously impacted the whole country including NCT of Delhi, the physical functioning of this Court and the District Courts in the NCT of Delhi is lying suspended ever since the lockdown was imposed by the Government in March 2020. However, to meet the needs of the people of NCT of Delhi and to provide access to justice to the people, this Court, and the District Courts, have been functioning through video-conferencing to deal with urgent matters which brook no delay.

The continuation of the pandemic has affected a large body of the litigants and advocates practicing in Delhi Courts. This Court has been receiving

representations from several quarters including the Bar Association of this Court and from the Bar Associations of the District Courts in the NCT of Delhi for resumption of physical functioning of the Courts.

The resumption of physical functioning of Courts in such times is not an easy decision to take, since the Courts are a place where a large body of people congregate which includes litigants, advocates, clerks, service providers such as stenos, typists, photocopiers, stationers, court staff and judges. The risk of rapid spread of Covid-19 virus is particularly high where people congregate in large numbers in any place, particularly, in a closed environment.

It is on account of the continued high incidence of spread of the virus in the NCT of Delhi, coupled with the risk that reopening of physical courts poses, that a decision to reopen the physical functioning of the Courts has not been taken till now, with a view to save precious lives of all the stakeholders in the judicial system. At the same time, the suspension of work in the Courts physically, cannot continue indefinitely.

As you are aware, Hon'ble the Chief Justice constituted a Committee of Senior Judges of this Court for preparation of a Graded Action Plan with the objective of reopening physical functioning of Courts. The said Committee has been meeting and taking decisions from time to time with a view to facilitate greater access to Courts by advocates and litigants during the suspension of physical functioning of the Courts.

The said Committee, in the light of the representations received from the several Bar Associations, met the President and Secretary of DHCBA on 28.07.2020 and the Presidents and Secretaries of all the other Bar Associations and the those of the Coordination Committee, virtually, on 11.08.2020. The said representatives were heard by the Committee and the recommendations of the Committee were duly approved by Hon'ble the Chief Justice. Thereafter, the Administrative and Supervision Committee of this Court, headed by Hon'ble the Chief Justice, deliberated upon the same and resolved as under:

*“This Committee is also of the opinion 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 first September, 2020 onwards.*

*To begin with, on experimental basis, around one-fourth of the courts can resume physical functioning on a rotational basis while the rest can continue taking up matters through video conferencing. The District and Sessions Judge (HQs), in consultation with the other District and Sessions Judges shall prepare a comprehensive plan on the above lines and 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 be prepared by the Registrar General for functioning of the Benches of this Court and it be also placed for consideration in the similar manner”*

The physical reopening of Courts in terms of the aforesaid decision of the Administrative and Supervision Committee would require the preparation of detailed Action Plans, and for evolution of Standard Operating Procedures(SOPs),

which would have to be strictly adhered to by all stakeholders of the judicial system, so as to prevent the spread of Covid-19 virus within the Court premises. This Court, and the District Courts are presently actively engaged in the process of evolving the SOPs. This Court and the District & Sessions Court concerned would share with all the Bar Associations the protocols/SOPs, once finalised.

Hon'ble the Chief Justice has directed me to convey his request to all of you to render fullest cooperation so that the decision of graded resumption of physical hearings in Courts is implemented smoothly while adhering to the norms of social-distancing and the guidelines contained in the proposed SOPs.

Regards

Yours sincerely,

Manoj Jain