



AN APPEAL TO THE MEMBERS OF THE BAR

From March 26, 2020, the Courts in the State of Karnataka are functioning partially with the cooperation of the members of the Bar. Due to sudden surge in the number of positive cases of COVID-19 in the State of Karnataka in July 2020, the judiciary is facing serious challenges.

As on today, 39 staff members working on the establishment of the High Court of Karnataka at Bengaluru have been tested positive for COVID-19. Test results of about 25 employees are awaited. About 45 employees have been quarantined. In fact from yesterday, 6 or 7 staff members of the computer team including the Registrar (Computers) and the Central Project Coordinator were required to undergo quarantine.

Due the fact that a large number of staff members have been tested positive, the rest of the staff members are working under a lot of tension. The High Court is required to operate with 30% to 40% staff at a given point of time. Notwithstanding these challenges, from today, the High Court of Karnataka has resumed physical filing and physical hearing of the matters in certain category of cases.

In the light of the aforesaid challenges, it may not be possible to list a large number of matters for preliminary hearing. Therefore, my earnest appeal to the members of the Bar is to submit requests for urgent listing only in those cases where there is a real genuine urgency and cases cannot wait for two to three weeks.

As far as the Courts in the districts are concerned, so far 7 Judicial Officers have been tested positive and 74 have been gone in quarantine. Totally 54 staff members in the district judiciary have been tested positive and 139 staff members have undergone quarantine. Due to various reasons, so far 40 Court complexes in the State were required to be closed for sanitization for one or two days. Physical filing of cases in the High Court and all the Courts in the District Judiciary, which was stopped temporarily on account of lockdown, has now been resumed. For facilitating physical filing, presence of a large number of staff members is necessary. As the law of limitation is not operating, my personal request to all the members of the Bar is to seek appointments for physical filing only in those cases where there is a genuine urgency.

As the entire judicial system in the State is facing a stiff challenge due to the spread of COVID-19 pandemic, I request the members of the Bar to continue their cooperation. It is only a temporary phase. Even we, the members of the judiciary, are eager to restore the normal functioning of all the Courts. However, we will have to wait till the spread of pandemic is substantially controlled.

I appeal to the members of the Bar to take all possible precautions and remain safe and ensure that others are also safe.

July 27, 2020

Sd/-
Justice Abhay Shreeniwas Oka
Chief Justice