

HIGH COURT OF GUJARAT

CIRCULAR

The Honourable Chief Justice has issued the following order to deal with the present crisis:

Considering the gravity of situation prevailing not only in the State of Gujarat but also in the entire nation, after due consultation with Honourable Members of the Standing Committee, learned Advocate General, learned Public Prosecutor, learned Government Pleader, learned Assistant Solicitor General and the President of the Gujarat High Court Advocates' Association, it has been decided to take up all extremely urgent matters, both on the civil and criminal side, in continuation of the previous orders issued, to be by Video Conferencing. This will be effective with effect from Monday, the 23rd March, 2020. The matters already fixed by the respective Courts for Monday, 23rd March, 2020 will be taken up by the newly assigned Division Bench and the learned Single Judge in their physical form in their respective Courts. No fresh filing in physical form will be accepted from Monday, 23rd March, 2020. However, the matters which have already been presented in the Registry, and in which mention for urgency is accepted during this crisis period, no soft copy would be required. The arguments thereof, however, will be through video conferencing only. The matters in which mention for being urgent, made before the assigned Benches on Monday, 23rd March, 2020 and accepted for being taken up on the same day, may be in the physical form. The modalities for submitting soft copies of the petition and connectivity by way of Video Conferencing are provided in detail in the attached methodology. This will curtail the movement of judges, lawyers, staff of the High Court as also the staff of the lawyers and the litigants. The Honourable Judges will work from their respective chambers whereas others will be able to work from home or their office.

One Division Bench for all civil & criminal matters and one Single Judge Bench for all civil & criminal matters would be nominated by the

Chief Justice for the said purpose. The Benches may change from day to day or remain the same as the Chief Justice may deem fit.

Matters where judgment is to be pronounced, would be notified through SMS & Email to the respective lawyers appearing in the matters and a link of Zoom Cloud Meeting would be sent indicating the time also so that respective lawyers may get connected and hear the pronouncement.

The above measures are being taken only for the period of the crisis presently prevailing. As soon as, normal functioning starts, the above system will cease.

sd/-

Date: 22.03.2020

REGISTRAR GENERAL

HIGH COURT OF GUJARAT

METHODOLOGY FOR e-FILING AND VIDEO CONFERENCING

22-03-2020

1) e-FILING:

- a) The complete petition in soft copy (scanned PDF format) filed through advocate, may be sent from registered email address of the advocate to **efiling.gujhc@gmail.com** one day in advance. Further, soft copies of the same may be sent to the Government Pleaders / Public Prosecutors Office at the following address **efiling.gujhcgp@gmail.com** for *civil matters*, **efiling.gujhcgp@gmail.com** for *criminal matters*, and **efiling.gujhcasg@gmail.com** for matters relating to *Central Government* respectively. A brief note explaining the extreme urgency would also accompany the petition. If urgency is considered favourably by the concerned Bench, necessary intimation of listing date and time will be informed to the petitioner/advocate.
- b) Payment of Court Fees and filing of affidavit by petitioner, as of now, are optional but the same will have to be furnished once the normal working of the High Court is restored.
- c) All pages of the petition would be signed by the petitioner / authorised agent and also by the lawyer before being scanned. Annexures to the petition, shall also be scanned in PDF format and sent along with the petition. However, upon restoration of normal functioning of the High Court, hard copies of the complete petition as required under the rules

would have to be supplied. In cases where affidavit has not been filed with the soft copy, the affidavit which may be subsequently be sworn, would contain recital to the effect that the petition was filed during the crisis period but its contents are being verified now. Even for the matters filed through e-filing during this crisis period and disposed of during this period, the petitioner and his/her lawyer would supply the hard copy complete in all respects, upon restoration of normal functioning of the High Court.

- d) The reply, civil application, miscellaneous civil application, if any, to be filed during this period, shall also be filed as per the method given for e-filing of petition.

2) Video Conferencing:

- a) On receipt of the SMS and on clicking on **Zoom Cloud Meeting** link, any device will be able to connect to the Video Meeting/Call initiated from the Court for that matter. As the link will be sent to only the registered advocates representing the parties in the matter or parties in case appearing in person, it is expected that only the advocates/party-in-person will join the meeting/call to participate in the hearing of the matter. If such a link is forwarded to another advocate (Senior Counsel etc.), the meeting can be joined by him/her also. The advocate / party-in-person will ensure that the link is not forwarded to any other advocate/person not connected with the matter.

b) In the above said video call platform, which is available for Desktop based platform as well as mobile/tablet device based platform, there is a facility of initiating a New Call/Meeting simultaneously generating a link of that particular Call/Meeting. The IT Cell has already developed the mechanism of transmitting an SMS message to the mobile numbers of the registered advocates appearing in the matter, wherein the said link can be sent for the matter to be taken up along with hearing schedule.

c) There would not be any requirement of any further user details being sought from the advocates/parties for ensuring the Zoom Calls access by them. The only requirement for advocates/parties would be that they should have **Zoom Cloud Meeting App** installed in any of their mobile/tablet devices (Android/iOS) or their Desktops with Windows/MacOS/Linux OS; with a Zoom Cloud Meeting user ID logged in.
