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* **IN THE HIGH COURT OF DELHI AT NEW DELHI**

+ W.P.(C) 3440/2020

S B TRIPATHI

.....Petitioner

Through: Mr. S.B. Tripathi, in person.

versus

HIGH COURT OF DELHI & ANR

....Respondents

Through: Mr. Sanjoy Ghose, Advocate for High Court of Delhi.

Mr. Abhijat, Secretary, Delhi High Court Bar Association.

Mr. Reetesh Singh, OSD (Examination), High Court of Delhi.

CORAM:

HON'BLE MS. JUSTICE HIMA KOHLI

HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE SUBRAMONIUM PRASAD

ORDER

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10.06.2020

HEARD THROUGH VIDEO CONFERENCING.

1. The petitioner, who appears in person and is a practicing advocate, seeks quashing of the order dated 29.05.2020, issued by the respondent No.1/High Court of Delhi, whereby judicial work of the High Court and the Subordinate Courts has been suspended till 14.06.2020. The petitioner also seeks directions that electronic filing and hearing of routine matters be permitted through video conferencing, both in the High Court and the Subordinate Courts.

2. It is ironical that on the one hand, the petitioner has shown such an anxiety that not just urgent matters, even routine matters ought to be taken up during the period of the lockdown and on the other hand, it has taken him two rounds of hearing to link up in this matter. On the first call, officers of the respondent No.1 and the Secretary of the respondent No.2/Delhi High Court Bar

Association were present, but repeated efforts made by the petitioner to link up had failed. The matter had to be passed over to await his presence. Even on the second call, the petitioner could join the hearing after much struggle. Sometimes his camera was directed towards the ceiling fan and at other times, at the window behind him. Only after efforts were made by us and learned counsel for the respondents to guide him, did the petitioner finally manage to show up on the camera.

3. We have enquired from Mr. Tripathi that when he has faced such a difficulty in appearing in the present matter, which has been listed before us on account of the urgency expressed by him, how does he propose to link up through video conferencing to address lengthy arguments in routine matters, as prayed for in the petition. Learned counsel sheepishly states that he has yet to get comfortable with the process.

4. There is no doubt that the procedure of hearing matters through video conferencing is new to both, the court and the learned counsel and each day throws a new challenge but that is not to say that the High Court and the Subordinate Courts have not risen to the occasion.

5. Mr. Reetesh Singh, OSD (Examination), High Court of Delhi informs us that during the lockdown period, 3,787 cases have been taken up for hearing by the High Court through video conferencing. Besides remand matters, the Subordinate Courts have taken up 23,339 matters through physical hearing and 14,482 matters through video conferencing. Thus, a total of 41,608 matters have been taken up by the Delhi High Court and the Subordinate Courts during the lockdown period, till 09.06.2020.

6. As for the contention of the petitioner that no serious efforts have been made by the High Court on the administrative side to resume normal functioning of the Courts during the lockdown period, Mr. Reetesh Singh states

that not less than 30 Administrative Orders have been issued during this period to streamline hearing of matters by the High Court and the Subordinate Courts.

7. Mr. Abhijat, Secretary of the Delhi High Court Bar Association submits that the issue relating to creation of adequate facilities for the District Courts to hear matters through video conferencing is already a subject matter of W.P.(C) 3227/2020, which is pending consideration.

8. In view of the submissions recorded above, the petitioner states that he does not wish to press the present petition and seeks leave to withdraw the same.

9. The petition is accordingly disposed of.

HIMA KOHLI, J.

SUBRAMONIUM PRASAD, J.

JUNE 10, 2020

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