

ORDER:

Several representations from the members of the Bar were received for and against the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) dated November 27, 2020. The same have been duly considered by the Chief Justice. The Hon'ble Judges of the Administrative Judges' Committee have been consulted. In an informal gathering of the Hon'ble Judges on December 4, 2020, the Hon'ble Judges present were of the view that the experiment to open up more Courts for physical hearings while maintaining the prescribed COVID norms and protocols to contain the spread of the virus has not shown any adverse result; on the contrary, physical hearings have been smooth and seamless, and beneficial not only for the Hon'ble Judges but also for the members of the Bar. Also, loss of precious judicial hours, at times, while hearings were conducted through virtual mode due to lack of proper connectivity has been obviated. All the Hon'ble Judges in one voice expressed in favour of continuation of physical hearings in tune with the SOP dated November 27, 2020 till January 8, 2021 on experimental basis. The Chief Justice along with Shri Justice Girish S. Kulkarni took a round of the High Court on December 3, 2020 while the Courts were in session and did not find any overcrowding, as alleged in some of the representations, either on the corridors or in the Bar rooms. Members of the Bar with whom Their Lordships had the

occasion to interact expressed satisfaction in regard to resumption of physical hearings in almost all Courts after months of waiting. Till date, there has been no incident of concern which would warrant discontinuation of physical hearings which have resumed on experimental basis.

In such view of the matter, it has been decided by the Chief Justice to continue with the SOP dated November 27, 2020 with liberty to the members of the Bar to approach each individual Bench to consider the desirability of fixing separate boards for morning and afternoon sessions to facilitate further smooth and seamless physical hearings in accordance with COVID norms and protocols.

Sd/-

4TH DECEMBER 2020

(S.G. DIGE)
REGISTRAR GENERAL