

Railway Claims Tribunal, Principal Bench, Delhi

Minutes of the Meeting held via Video Conferencing with Representatives of the Bar Associations and Advocates practising at RCT Delhi, Ghaziabad and Lucknow Benches on 26.04.2021 at 2.00 p.m.

Present:

S.No.	Name	Designation
1.	Sh. K. S. Ahluwalia	Hon'ble Chairman, RCT, Delhi
2.	Sh. Sunil Mathur	Hon'ble Member (Tech.)
3.	Sh Vijay Kumar	Hon'ble Member (Tech)
4.	Sh S.K. Sharma	Hon'ble Member (Tech)
5.	Smt. Aashima Mehrotra	Registrar
6.	Smt Sarah Jayal Sawakmie	Addl. Registrar
7.	Sh. K.P.S Nirwal	Asstt. Registrar
8.	Sh. N.L. Gandhi	PS to Hon'ble Chairman
9.	Shri D.S Bhardwaj	C.O.S
10.	Smt Sonal Behl	Court Master
11.	Sh. Jitender Vikram Singh	Court Master
12.	Shri Ajit K. Bhatnagar	CLA, Northern Railway
13.	Ms Sarv Mangla	CLA, Northern Railway
Advocates and Representatives of Railway Claims Tribunal Bar Associations		
S.No.	Name	Designation
1.	Smt. Ashima Sood	Treasurer, Bar Association of RCT/Delhi
2.	Sh. Dushyant Swaroop	Advocate
3.	Sh. Anupam Srivastava	Railway Advocate

4.	Sh. Saurabh Gupta	Railway Advocate
5.	Sh. M.S Bhatia	Advocate
6.	Sh. Subhash Sachdeva	Advocate
7.	Sh. B.S Mahur	Advocate
8.	Sh. H.K. Gautam	Advocate
9.	Shri Nitesh Sharma	Advocate
10.	Shri Rajesh Panda	Advocate
11.	Sh. Salek Chand	Advocate
12.	Shri Surendra Suryan	Advocate
13.	Shri Nikunj Dhawan	Advocate
14.	Shri Anuj Gupta	Advocate
15.	Shri Sanjay Shukla	Advocate
16.	Shri M.P Rana	Advocate
17.	Shri Dilawar Singh	Advocate
18.	Shri R.K Agnihotri	Advocate
19.	Smt Neeta Jha	Advocate
20.	Shri Rajan Sood	Advocate
21.	Smt Purnima Sharma	Advocate

1. A meeting was organised on 26.04.21 with the advocates practicing at RCT, Delhi which included the office bearers of the three Bar Associations namely Bar Association of RCT/Delhi, Bar Association of erstwhile RCT/ Ghaziabad and the Association of Railway Advocates. The main agenda of the meeting was to take a considered decision in view of the grim situation prevailing on account of steep rise in COVID-19 cases, lockdown declared in Delhi area and the recent order of Hon'ble High Court of Delhi to restrict hearings to urgent matters only and adjourn other matter en bloc.

2. The meeting commenced with the Hon'ble Chairman, RCT, extending a warm welcome to all the participants.
3. Registrar, RCT gave a short brief about the agenda of the meeting and requested the Bar Association representatives to express their views on the matter.
4. Shri. Dushyant Swaroop, was of the opinion that the latest orders of Hon'ble Delhi Court dated 23.4.2021 should be adhered to. He quoted from the order which is reproduced as follows:

“All the judicial officers shall continue to take up only urgent cases of their respective Courts through video conferencing mode and all other pending routine/non-urgent matters be adjourned en bloc and information in this regard be uploaded on the Delhi District Court”.

5. Shri. Nitesh Sharma, advocate stated that the family members of most advocates have been affected by COVID-19. Therefore, it would be better if the directions of the Hon'ble High Court of Delhi is adopted in RCT, Delhi i.e. adjourning all the matters en bloc till 15.5.21 and virtual court hearings be taken up only in matters of urgent nature. This view was also reiterated by Smt. Ashima Sood, Shri. R.K. Agnihotri, Shri. Subhash Sachdeva, Shri. Surendra Suryan, Shri M.S. Bhatia.
6. Shri. H. K. Gautam, advocate mentioned that 6 advocates in Ghaziabad have died in the last two days due to COVID -19. He stated that the prevailing COVID situation is such that it is not possible for advocates to go to their office to get the case files. He has thus requested that no cases should be heard till 15th of May.
7. Shri. Mahur stated that virtual courts should be suspended completely till 15.5.21 and that matters of urgent nature should also not be taken up as the COVID-19 situation has reached an unprecedented stage. He said that there is no matter more urgent than life.
8. Therefore, all the advocates unanimously requested that the directions of the Hon'ble High Court of Delhi dated 23.04.2021 be followed and that virtual courts should be deferred completely till 15.5.2021. Only matters of urgent nature should be taken up after the request for the same is made to Registrar/ADR two days in advance.

9. Shri. Mahur also expressed his concern that no staff who is found COVID positive should be permitted to attend the RCT office in order to ensure safety of all.
10. Smt. Aashima Sood requested that the date for removal of objections be extended in light of the prevailing pandemic situation.
11. The views of the Hon'ble Members (Tech.) were taken. Both Shri. Sunil Mathur and Shri. Vijay Kumar were of the opinion that keeping in mind the apprehensions of the advocates and the present health emergency, it would be prudent to adhere to the orders of the Hon'ble Delhi High Court.
12. After listening to the unanimous views of the advocates from the Claimants side and Respondent side and taking the inputs from the Hon'ble Members (Technical), and Registrar, RCT, Hon'ble Chairman issued the following directions:
 - i. From 27.04.2021 till 15.05.2021, all the cases listed before the Benches of the Tribunal at Delhi shall stand adjourned en bloc.
 - ii. Any advocate from either side desiring to have an urgent hearing of his/her case shall submit a written application to the Registrar/ADR of the Tribunal, who will be available on Phone/video conferencing alternatively on all working days for 2 hours daily from 10:30am to 12:30 am. The nature of urgency shall be clearly specified in the application. After due consideration, the Registrar/ADR shall place the matter before the Bench concerned.
 - iii. One Single Member Bench each of Hon'ble Chairman, Shri. Sunil Mathur, Hon'ble Member (Tech.) and Shri. Vijay Kumar, Hon'ble Member (Tech.) shall function on the first, second and third week respectively till 15.05.2021. The matter of urgent nature, if any, shall be placed before the Bench for further decision.
 - iv. If the Hon'ble High Court of Delhi extends the present system of hearing beyond 15th May, 2021, the same shall be automatically extended in RCT, Delhi else another virtual consultative meeting shall be held on 15.5.2021 to decide on the further course of action.

- v. In light of the prevailing circumstances, the date for removal of objections has been extended by one month.
- vi. For petty matters of corrections of names, case numbers etc. in judgments, the advocate concerned shall approach Registrar/ADR of the Bench, who shall help/assist the party concerned in redressal of their grievance.

The proceedings of the meeting concluded with the Vote of thanks to the Chair and all the attendees.


(Aashima Mehrotra)
Registrar

Dated: 26.04.2021

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1. Presenting Officer, RCT Delhi
2. RCT Web Portal