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Chief Justice of India Sharad A. Bobde (Photo: PTI)

CJI rules out total shutdown of Supreme Court amid coronavirus threat

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PTI

Justice Bobde said as virtual courts were on the verge of commencement, there could only be a possibility of limited shutdown at the present instance

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New Delhi: Chief Justice of India S A Bobde Close Monday made it clear that there cannot be a "complete shutdown" of courts due the novel coronavirus pandemic.

The CJI held a meeting with four apex court judges, bar leaders of the Supreme Court Advocates-on-Record Association and eminent doctors, including Randeep Guleria from the AIIMS, New Delhi, to discuss the situation and the steps that can be taken to prevent the spread of the deadly disease.

Justice Bobde ruled out the possibility of shutdown of the top court and said as virtual courts were on the verge of commencement, there could only be a possibility of limited shutdown at the present instance, SCAORA said in its release.

"The meeting was chaired by the Chief Justice of India along with Justice Arun Mishra, Justice U.U. Lalit, Justice D.Y. Chandrachud and Justice L. Nageswara Rao," the statement said, adding that the CJI had requested the bar to ensure compliance of the safety measures as suggested by experts.

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Justice Bobde had further clarified that any demand of the bar and the bench would be subordinated to the medical advice drawn in the meeting, it said.

The bar said that a common medical advice was issued by medical experts after the meeting.

A declaration ought to be obtained by all the persons seeking entry to the court, stating: "Whether the person has travelled overseas especially to any of the notified countries? (and in case of the person having visited any of the notified countries he/she should not be allowed any access to the Court)," one of the advice reads.

It said that a visitor to the apex court would have to disclose either the person had any cough or cold for past one or two days.

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"Whether the person has anybody in his close contact of any infected person?," it said.

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Thermal screening at the entry level of the courts will be installed, it said.

The CJI has suggested that both the SCBA and SCAORA should ensure that "proper communications were to be made with the members of the bar with regard to the awareness of self discipline and also motivate the members (in case of symptoms) to disclose and self restrain from attending courts".

The CJI asked bar bodies to deploy volunteers in court halls, and encourage the members to keep distance and request the lawyers to leave the premises as soon as their matter concludes.

"Members of the bar to be prepared to accept, encourage and promote e-filing and video conference of court halls, which will commence shortly," it said.

The judges have also assured that no adverse orders will be passed and adjournments will be granted leniently, it added.

*This story has been published from a wire agency feed without modification
Only the headline has been changed.*

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