

Dr. VIKAS SINGH

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06.11.2024

Dr. Justice D.Y. Chandrachud
The Chief Justice of India
Supreme Court of India
New Delhi - 110001.

Subject: Revocation of decision of having a Museum in the High Security Zone and cancellation of inauguration of the Museum in place of Judges' Library on 07.11.2024.

Dear Dr. Chandrachud,

I write to you with deep pain and anguish, and a sense of urgency on behalf of the advocate community, compelled by the recent developments concerning infrastructure and resource allocations at the Supreme Court. I wish to bring to your attention the complete neglect of the Bar's essential needs in recent infrastructure decisions. These decisions have systematically overlooked the requirements of the members of the Bar, impacting our ability to fulfil our professional duties effectively and efficiently.

Recently, the Hon'ble Supreme Court decided to convert the Judges' Library into a museum, despite the fact that the Judges' Library is located in a high-security zone, which makes it unsuitable for public access. This decision fails to consider the needs of the Bar, which has grown significantly in numbers over the years.

Unfortunately, no accessible space has been allocated in recent years for the Bar's use near the courtrooms of the Hon'ble Supreme Court. Instead, the locations provided are either too far from the courtrooms or situated on different floors, which is impractical and inconvenient for practising members of the Bar. The Bar Members while waiting for their matters need essential facilities, including a cafeteria, workstations, a library, ladies' bar rooms, and lunch rooms. But, despite repeated requests during my tenure for three terms as the President of the Supreme Court Bar Association, these necessary and basic amenities have not been provided till date.

In addition to these crucial facilities, the Bar urgently requires more collaborative meeting spaces where lawyers can discuss cases with their colleagues, particularly for complex cases that require team collaboration. Such spaces would enable lawyers to prepare more thoroughly for their cases and ensure the highest standards of legal representation. Many of our members have requested digital resources and facilities, including access to online legal databases and printers located conveniently near the courtrooms. Modern legal practice is heavily dependent on technology, and having these resources accessible within

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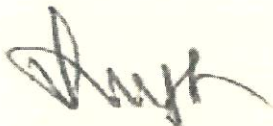
the court premises would save members valuable time and enable them to make real-time adjustments to their case preparations.

In these circumstances, converting the Judges' Library into a museum denies the members their rightful facilities. It must be emphasized that the Bar is as much a stakeholder in this institution, which serves as a pillar of democracy for the nation and is sustained with public funds, making it the responsibility of the esteemed institution to cater to the needs of all its stakeholders.

Furthermore, I understand that the land on Ring Road, which was intended for use as chambers for the Bar, has now been designated for the construction of workstations. Workstations located at such a distant location serve little purpose, as most lawyers already have places to work away from the court premises. Practicing lawyers only need workstations near the courtrooms to conduct research, allowing them to make effective use of their spare time amid hearings to assist the Hon'ble court to the best of their ability.

The Bar's long-standing request has been to build as many chambers as possible on the land at Ring Road so that lawyers can meet clients there, thus preparing effectively to assist the Hon'ble court and deliver justice. By instead using this land for workstations or an arbitration centre, the needs of the Bar are being systematically disregarded in the infrastructure planning of the Hon'ble Supreme Court.

The Bar is an integral part of this esteemed institution, and its needs and requirements are legitimate and must be considered in any infrastructure development. I respectfully urge the Hon'ble Supreme Court to reconsider recent decisions in light of the Bar's growing needs. By working together and addressing these issues, we can ensure a functional and inclusive environment that supports the judiciary, the citizens of the country and the legal practitioners who serve them.



[VIKAS SINGH]

CC: Hon'ble Mr. Justice Sanjiv Khanna
Hon'ble Mr. Justice Bhushan Ramkrishna Gavai
Hon'ble Mr. Justice Surya Kant
Hon'ble Mr. Justice Hrishikesh Roy
Mr. Atul M. Kurhekar, Secretary General, Supreme Court of India
Mr. Kapil Sibal, President, Supreme Court Bar Association