

## **SC heard 593 matters, delivered verdicts in 215 cases during COVID-19 lockdown**

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The Supreme Court heard 593 matters via video-conferencing and delivered judgement in 215 of them in a month during the unprecedented nationwide lockdown.

As COVID- 19 infections spread in the country, the Supreme Court shut its doors to litigants and lawyers on March 23, two days before the lockdown came into force, but opened up to a virtual new way of functioning, albeit with a reduced strength.

In normal times, the apex court dispose of nearly 3,500 cases on an average a month.

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Though the first phase of the nationwide lockdown for containing the spread of coronavirus started on March 25, the apex court had issued a circular on March 23 restricting entry of advocates and litigants in its premises.

The circular had said that only matters involving extreme urgency would be heard by the top court through video-conferencing during the lockdown, which has now been extended till May 3.

The data released by the top court said that as on April 24, the apex court had disposed of 84 review petitions.

It said that out of 87 benches, 34 heard main matters while 53 benches took up review petitions for adjudication.

The data said that 390 main matters, along with 203 connected cases, were heard during this period.

It said verdicts were delivered in 215 cases, out of which 174 were connected matters.

Regarding the problem of technical glitches faced by lawyers during hearing through video-conferencing, an apex court source said this is due to internet connectivity issues at the residences or offices of advocates.

The source said that Supreme Court judges, who are hearing matters through video-conferencing from their residences, have been provided with internet connectivity with speed of up to 100Mbps at their residences and they have not experienced any difficulties.

Many lawyers join the hearing through their mobile phones or tablets and they get disconnected when their device receives another call, said the source.

According to the annual report 2018-19, published by the Supreme Court, a total of 34,653 cases were disposed of between January and October last year, making it an average of 3,465 cases a month.

*(Economic Times)*