

Message from NBA President



Dear NBA Members,

Amidst the outbreak of corona virus disease (COVID-19) now surging to a scale of global pandemic and the virus sparing no territories and countries in the world, Nepal and the people here are no exception to the suffering from this unseen enemy. While the governments around the world have been trying every possible measure to fight the disease, it necessitates every single member in the society to express sincere solidarity with support towards their own community and the government. Now is the time to resuscitate the activities in the society during and after the pandemic in order to commence and maintain the normal activities with fresh alternatives. The economic cycle can sustain/enliven only by the regular movement of societal factors and activities performed in the community by each and every profession and businesses. Thus, it calls for substitute approaches to our daily performance. Definitely, health safety and protection of human lives is of utmost priority, however, at the same time, basic fundamental Rights granted in the constitution and charters to the people should not be paralyzed.

Nepal Bar Association (NBA), is working closely with the Supreme Court of Nepal in determining access to justice in the face of probable long closures, to come-up with different safety measures for the stakeholders of courts including NBA members.

NBA, institutionally and its members acknowledged as social engineer and human right defender, NBA is engaged in human rights situation monitoring network, regarding COVID-19 working procedure along with Federation of Nepalese Journalists(FNJ) and NGO federation of Nepal lead by National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) Nepal. The areas and scope of monitoring network covers the protection of fundamental rights and action taken by the government in Nepal. On this I would like to thank all presidents of unit bar associations for their great efforts to uphold the human rights.

There is no need to reiterate here any of what you all have been hearing from the government authority that only the Essential Services are being allowed to operate in the present lockdown period. Although the role of lawyers is essential to uphold the justice through representation, the legal profession has not being categorized as the Essential Service under the prevailing laws. In order to minimize the risk of COVID 19, the government authority

controlled the movement of people including legal professionals. Considering the requirement of vehicle pass in Kathmandu valley, NBA has immediately approached Nepal Bar Council to manage and issue vehicle passes. At present, I am sure that the members attending court case are receiving vehicle pass from Nepal Bar Council without any delay.

I have also noted that various virtual interactions programs are being carried out specially with the personal initiation of youth NBA members. I strongly believe that we do not have any alternative other than transforming legal profession into technology based legal profession. NBA has started consultation to establish "Technology Section" within the premises of NBA to train its members through different unit bar associations to enhance the technology-based knowledge.

I believe that the responsibility of NBA towards its members should not only be limited to protection and promotion of legal profession but should go beyond to provide financial support to its individual members (to the extent possible), who are financially weak to bear his/her emergency medical expenses and basic needs. Considering this, NBA through virtual meeting dated 17 May 2020 established a relief fund called "Legal Professional Relief Fund". Thus, I would personally request all the members of NBA to make voluntary contribution to the fund as a professional solidarity.

Furthermore, on behalf of NBA I would like to urge to all concerned authorities and bodies to introduce pandemic favorable jurisprudence in sequence to justice delivery, to implement different interventions and policies, and dissemination of campaign through appropriate tools and possible alternatives during the pandemic. In this regard, NBA is eager to join hands with all in course of fighting against our common enemy, COVID -19.

NBA is also conscious to protect professional and social security of member lawyers while still striving to apply different NBA interventions and activities with your kind support and feedback.

THANK YOU & STAY SAFE.

Sincerely,

Chandeshwor Shrestha
President
24 May 2020