

PIL No. 17 of 2021

Date of order: 16.12.2021

Philip Khrawbok Shati Vs. State of Meghalaya & Ors.

Coram:

Hon'ble Mr. Justice Sanjib Banerjee, Chief Justice
Hon'ble Mr. Justice W. Diengdoh, Judge

Appearance:

For the Petitioner/Appellant(s) : Mr. H.L. Shangreiso, Sr. Adv. with
Ms. P. Biswakarma, Adv.

For the Respondent(s) : Mr. B. Bhattacharjee, AAG with
Ms. R. Colney, GA
Mr. V.G.K. Kynta, SC, KHADC
Mr. S.P. Mahanta, Sr Adv. [For R 16]
Dr. N. Mozika, ASG [For R 18]

The matter pertains to the traffic congestion in Shillong, particularly around the central business district and Kachari area.

The writ petitioner complains of pregnant women delivering inside cars or critical patients dying without being able to reach hospitals or school children failing to reach school on time. The petitioner says that at times there are long queues as a result of irregular parking or far too many cars than the roads may be able to bear.

It is submitted on behalf of the State that the traffic in Shillong is a problem and it is magnified by the fact that this being a hilly area, alternative roads may not be easily carved out and a large chunk of the land around central Shillong is defence land.

There is no denying that the traffic needs to be regulated. While the specific measures that need to be taken cannot be dictated by the Court, the present state of affairs cannot be permitted to continue. Whether it is by constructing bypasses as a long-term measure or making some streets one-way as a short-term measure or regulating the number of cars or even staggering school timings so they do not clash with the office working hours, some measures need to be thought of. Every day, the major traffic on even the Guwahati-Shillong Highway comes to a standstill and queues of more than 3 km of stalled cars are a common sight. It is the same for the road

leading to Sohra (Cherrapunjee) and getting into or out of Shillong is a virtual nightmare.

It is hoped that the police authorities along with the State and local administration adopt immediate measures to ease the traffic in Shillong, particularly around the central business district and the entry and exit points. The State will furnish a report indicating the immediate measures proposed to be adopted to ease the traffic snarls which are an everyday affair in this fast growing city. The report should be prepared by the third respondent in consultation with the Superintendent of Traffic Police here and other appropriate authorities including the respondent Nos. 12, 14, 15, and 16. The authorities must also appreciate that no effective traffic management may be possible unless hawkers are regulated and are removed from the carriageways.

At any rate, the random parking of cars has to be checked and areas slightly away from congested places may be earmarked for parking. It is equally possible that certain areas be reserved strictly for pedestrian traffic and altogether closed for regular traffic.

Let the matter appear a week after the vacation.

List on February 8, 2022.

(W. Diengdoh)
Judge

(Sanjib Banerjee)
Chief Justice

Meghalaya
16.12.2021
"Sylvana PS"