

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JHARKHAND AT RANCHI

W.P.(PIL) No. 7197 of 2025

Court on its Own Motion

Versus

The State of Jharkhand and others

... .. Respondents

CORAM : HON'BLE THE CHIEF JUSTICE

HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE MANOJ PRASAD

For the Petitioner:

Mr Ritesh Kumar Mahto, Amicus Curiae

For the Resp-State:

Mr Rohitashya Roy, AG

Mr Vibhor Mayank, AC to AG

For the Private Respondents:

Mr S.L.Agrawal, Advocate

Ms Ayushi, Advocate

09 /Dated: 24.09.2026

1. Heard the learned Advocate General for the State of Jharkhand and other learned counsel appearing in this matter.

2. Pursuant to our order dated 27.08.2026, the Director General of Police (DGP) of the State of Jharkhand has filed an affidavit on 11th of September 2026.

3. The affidavit, besides repeating the excuses which were given in the past and found to be unacceptable, now states that “*she does not have the authority to issue independent and separate direction for installation of CCTV camera in the police station situated within the State of Jharkhand*”.

4. The DGP further submitted that the Home, Prison and Disaster Management Department, Jharkhand, is the parent department and, as such, competent to take the appropriate decision.

5. The above contention in paragraph 5 of the DGP's affidavit is reiterated by her in paragraph 12, which is quoted below for the convenience of reference: -

“12. That at cost of reiteration it is submitted that the Director General of Police, Jharkhand does not have the authority to take independent and separate decision for installation of CCTV

cameras in Police Station, more particularly when the parent department Home, Prison and Disaster Management Department, Government of Jharkhand has been taking suitable action in this regard.”

6. In short, at this belated stage, the DGP at least *prima facie* wishes to abdicate all responsibility for compliance with judicial orders made from time to time regarding the installation of CCTV cameras in police stations in Jharkhand.

7. In W.P.(PIL) No. 1218 of 2022, this Court was concerned with the unfortunate menace of custodial deaths in the State of Jharkhand. The statistical data furnished by the State Government, which was incidentally restricted only to custodial deaths from 2018 onwards, revealed that there were 427 custodial deaths.

8. The Bench, which disposed of W.P.(PIL) No. 1218 of 2022, recorded that it was shocked beyond words at this alarming figure of 427 custodial deaths between 2018 and 2026.

9. Despite the above, we note that, from time to time, judicial directives to install CCTV cameras in police stations in the State of Jharkhand are being flouted. The typical modus operandi appears to be to invite tenders and make a pretence of compliance, followed by cancellation of those tenders for some reason or the other.

10. So far, we have noted that every time this matter was due to come up for consideration, this Court was first informed of the invitation to tender and the last date for consideration of the bids. After that, we were informed of difficulties in the tender process and the dates by which the tenders would be finalised. Finally, it was stated that, for some reason or another, the tenders

themselves were cancelled, and a fresh proposal would be moved to invite fresh tenders.

11. The Coordinate Benches have taken cognisance of all this and found that this was a time-tested *modus operandi* to defy the Court's orders or to delay implementation to the extent possible. Now, the DGP seeks to apportion the blame on the Home, Prison and Disaster Management Department.

12. We are quite confident that the departmental head of this Department will either take a diametrically opposite position or find another department to apportion the blame to. At least *prima facie*, through such bureaucratic red tape, the State has, up to now, successfully delayed the implementation of the Court's orders, if not altogether refusing to comply with them.

13. The usual phrases in each of the affidavits filed by the State authorities, about tendering unqualified and unconditional apologies or that the Officers cannot even think of disobeying any orders passed by the Court, ring quite hollow if all these circumstances are considered.

14. At least in a State where the official records admit to about 427 custodial deaths during the short period between 2018 and 2026, there should have been no delay in complying with the Court's orders to install CCTV cameras in all the police stations. At least *prima facie*, we get the impression of a systematic effort to delay, if not outright disobedience.

15. Considering the affidavit filed by the DGP, which virtually apportions the blame on the Additional Chief Secretary, Home, Prison and Disaster Management Department, Jharkhand, we issue notice to Ms Vandana Dhadel, presently the Additional Chief Secretary, heading the said

Department, to show cause as to why action under the Contempt of Courts Act should not be initiated against her.

16. The DGP may file her affidavit if she so desires, latest by 14th of October 2026. We accordingly direct the Registry to issue notice in Form-I along with a copy of the petition, annexures and affidavits filed herein. The Registry is to ensure that the notice is served personally on the DGP within ten days from today. The copies of the orders passed in this matter from time to time may also be enclosed along with the notice under Form-I.

17. The learned Advocate General states that some time may be granted to indicate the timeline within which the directions for installation of CCTV cameras in all the police stations within the State of Jharkhand would be completed. He requests time until 14 October 2026 to file an affidavit and indicate the timeline.

18. Mr S. L. Agarwal, learned counsel for Dr Jaya Agarwal, seeks two weeks' time to file an affidavit. Dr Agarwal may file her affidavit, at the latest, by 14th of October 2026.

19. We expect the Chief Secretary of the State of Jharkhand to assume responsibility in this regard and file an affidavit. An affidavit on behalf of JAP-IT or any contractor will not be acceptable.

20. List the matter on 15th October 2026.

(M.S. Sonak, C.J.)

(Manoj Prasad, J.)

September 24, 2026
Manoj / R.Kr.