

* **IN THE HIGH COURT OF DELHI AT NEW DELHI**

+ **W.P.(C) URGENT 3/2020 (To be numbered subsequently)**

GAURAV KUMAR BANSAL Petitioner

Through: Petitioner in person.

versus

UNION OF INDIA & ANOTHER Respondents

Through: Mr. Jasmeet Singh, CGSC.

CORAM:

HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE SANJEEV SACHDEVA

HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE NAVIN CHAWLA

ORDER

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03.04.2020

1. The hearing was conducted through video conferencing.
2. Petitioner, a lawyer by profession has filed this PIL to address the problems being faced by the Indian students who are presently studying in Bangladesh. It is contended that petitioner was approached by Indian students presently in Bangladesh, who are facing great difficulty.
3. Petitioner has sought for a direction to the Union of India to take steps for ensuring safety of Indian students in Bangladesh and also for appointment of a nodal officer in the Indian Embassy and to make available, the contact and email addresses of the nodal officers so that the Indian citizens could contact and seek help from the nodal officer. On 30.03.2020 it was pointed out by Mr. Bansal that there were approximately 500 odd students studying in various medical

colleges and they were facing difficulty with regard to the basic facility which was earlier available in the hostels.

4. On 30.03.2020, Mr. Jasmeet Singh, learned Central Government Standing Counsel appearing for the Central Government had stated that if details of the representatives of the students studying in the 19 medical colleges was made available, the nodal officer would contact the representatives of each of the medical colleges and ascertain the difficulties being faced by them.

5. Details of the representatives of the medical colleges was provided by the petitioner to the learned counsel appearing for the Union of India.

6. A status report in the form of an email has been filed by Mr. Jasmeet Singh. A short affidavit has also been filed along with the status report.

7. It is stated in the affidavit that since the outbreak of COVID-19 Government of India has taken proactive steps to ensure safety, welfare and well being of the Indian nationals abroad as well as its people in India. A high-level Group of Ministers has been formed to review the current status and actions for prevention and management of COVID-19 and appropriate advisories are being issued from time to time.

8. A COVID-19 cell has been formed to ensure greater access and precision of information. Sub-groups dealing with different regions of

the world has also been created. Missions/Posts abroad have been advised to set up dedicated helpline numbers and given wide publicity to the same to assist stranded Indians. A list of nodal officers of Missions/Posts has been annexed with the affidavit. Nodal officers have been identified and designated at each Mission/Post to provide assistance to Indian nationals abroad and a 24 x 7 helpline number and an email have been made functional for the said purpose and the helpline numbers and email IDs have been widely publicized through social networking sites, official government websites so that Indians abroad get information regarding the same.

9. It is further stated that a large number of Indian students are studying abroad and the missions are in constant touch with their Universities/educational institutions for rendering assistance to those students.

10. It is further stated in the affidavit that the Ambassadors are interacting with the Indian community through virtual platforms for their engagement in the time of crisis and to provide assistance. Indian nationals and communities are being mobilized to help fellow Indian in distress in their country and wherever possible, the Missions are providing food, accommodation etc to stranded Indian citizens.

11. With regard to the steps taken by the Mission in Bangladesh, it is stated that a 24 x 7 helpline was established on 15.03.2020 to address all queries of Indian citizens and Indian community and regular information is being shared through website and social media

platforms of the Mission and the four Assistant High Commissions in Bangladesh and timely information regarding various travel advisories are being issued to the students community through social platforms on daily basis.

12. It is stated that since the educational institutions were closed in Bangladesh, all local Bangladeshi students have left for their homes and only foreign students including Indian students remained back and the High Commission has contacted the concerned authorities in the colleges to keep the canteens/mess running and make available any resources within their capacity to ensure the well being of Indian students and all authorities have responded positively and confirmed that all means of assistance, cooperation and support shall be provided for the well being of Indian students.

13. It is stated that there are 114 medical colleges in Bangladesh and around 6000 Indian students study in these colleges and approximately 500 Indian students have stayed back in Bangladesh. With regard to this situation, it is stated that since most of the medical colleges are attached to hospitals. In case of any emergency these hospitals are best equipped to deal with the situation. With regard to sanitizers, it is stated that the same are available with the colleges and in case of any short supply they are available in the market. The colleges in Bangladesh are trying to provide basic facilities to all the students who are in the hostels. However, where any Indian student reaches out to the High Commission, they are being counselled and provided necessary help. It is further stated that in the present

lockdown situation, it is not possible for the Ministry to organise any evacuation of Indian Nationals from Bangladesh or any other country, however all possible help and assistance is being provided to all Indian nationals.

14. In addition to the affidavit, Mr. Jasmeet Singh, learned Central Government Standing Counsel has filed a status report wherein it is informed that in addition to the existing nodal officer, the First Secretary (Education) has been nominated as an additional nodal officer to provide assistance to the students in Bangladesh and the said nodal officer has contacted one student each of each of the medical colleges as per the list provided by the petitioner and also the principals of the medical colleges individually and the medical colleges have assured their fullest cooperation during this period and some of the principals of these colleges have even visited the residential facilities of the students to check their well being.

15. It is stated that with regard to food and facilities, a majority of the students are availing mess facilities, however, some students have on their own volition started running their own mess because of social distancing.

16. Mr. Jasmeet Singh further under instructions submits that all possible help and assistance shall be provided to all Indian citizens and particularly Indian students in Bangladesh to ensure their well-being.

17. In view of the affidavit and the status report filed by the

respondent/Union of India, we are of the view that no further orders are called for in this petition.

18. The petition is accordingly disposed of. However, liberty is granted to the petitioner to approach this Court again in case the need so arises in the future.

19. The order be uploaded on the website forthwith.

20. Copy of the order be also forwarded to the counsels through email.



SANJEEV SACHDEVA, J

NAVIN CHAWLA, J

APRIL 03, 2020

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