



HIGH COURT OF CHHATTISGARH AT BILASPUR

WPPIL No. 2 of 2026

In The Matter Of Suo Moto Public Interest Litigation

Versus

State Of Chhattisgarh

Order Sheet

17/03/2026	This is an office reference. Heard Mr. Sudeep Shrivastava, learned counsel appointed as Amicus Curiae (through video conferencing) along with Ms. Surbhi Yadav, Advocate. Also heard Mr. Shashank Thakur, learned Additional Advocate General for the State, Mr. Anadi Sharma, learned counsel for respondent No.5. In compliance to the Court's order dated 05.02.2026, The Director, Training Operation. Fire and Emergency Services, Home Guard and State Disaster Respondent Force (SDRF), has filed his affidavit, relevant paras of which are reproduced hereinbelow:

“6. It is submitted that, at present the details of fire station is as under:-

There are fully constructed fire station working in Durg, Nava Raipur, Ambikapur, Jagdalpur, Janjgir-Champa, Korba, Raigarh, Rajnandgaon and Kabirdham.

The fire stations are under construction in Urla-Siltara, Bilaspur.

The fire stations which are in tendering process are at Jashpur, Mahasamund, Koriya, Dantewada, Kanker, Balodabazar, Dhamtari.

The places where fire station is yet to be set up and constructed are Raipur, Narayanpur, Gourella-Pendra- Marwahi, Sukma, Khairagarh-Chhuikhadan-Gandai, Manendragarh-Chirmiri-Bharatpur, Mohla-Maanpur- Ambagarh Chowki, Sarangarh, Kondagaon, Balrampur, Balod, Surajpur, Gariyaband, Bijapur, Sakti, Mungeli, Bemetara.

The details of fire stations by way of a tabular chart are attached herewith as Document-1.

7. It is submitted that, as far as the steps undertaken for explanation and augmentation of fire service in the State of Chhattisgarh is concerned, it is submitted that there are at present 147 fire fighting vehicles available in the State, in the year 2024-25, 20 vehicles were purchased and in the 2025-26, 07 vehicles were purchased. There are 09 fully constructed fire stations, there are 02 fire station which are under construction and there are 07 fire stations where the construction is proposed.

8. It is submitted that, in so far as the situation where there at present there is no fire station is concerned, it is submitted that tendering process is going on for Jashpur, Mahasamund, Korea, Dantewada, Kanker, Balodabazar, Dhamtari. However, in some other places where there is no fire station that is in Raipur, Manendragarh-Narayanpur, Gourella-Pendra-Marwahi, Sukma, Mohla-Maanpur-Ambagarh Khairagarh-Chhuikhadan-Gandai, Chirmiri-Bharatpur, Chowki, Sarangarh, Kondagaon, Balrampur, Balod, Surajpur, Gariyaband,

Bijapur, Sakti, Mungeli and Bemetara. The fire station is being operated under Home Guard premises.

09.It is submitted that, the Department of Fire and Emergency Service is facing issues pertaining to availability of land for construction of fire stations in various districts and to this effect the Department of Home of which the Fire and Emergency Service happens to be a part has written a letter dated 10.09.2025 to all the District Magistrates of Chhattisgarh to make available land for construction of fire stations, the letter dated 10.09.2025 records that although adequate fund is provided, the site made available for construction of fire stations is far away from the city due to which the response time of fire service in times of emergency gets prolonged. The letter dated 10.09.2025 urges the District Magistrates to provide for a land which is not excessively far away from the city so that movement can be made without much delay in times of emergency. Copy of letter dated 10.09.2025 is attached herewith as Document-2.

10. It is submitted that, the Department of Revenue and Disaster Management has also communicated to District Collectors of Balod, Balodabazar, Gariyaband, Dantewada, Kanker, Sukma, Mungeli, Surajpur, Jashpur, Koriya, Sakti and Narayanpur regarding the letter of Home District dated 10.09.2025, by way of its letter dated 02-02-2026 and has asked the concerned authority to provide for minimum 2 acres of land at suitable locations for construction of fire stations. Copy of letter dated 02.02.2026 is attached herewith as Document-3.

11. It is submitted that, in so far as the interplay between the three legislations under which Fire and Emergency Services are dealt with i.e., the Chhattisgarh Municipal Corporation Act 1956, Chhattisgarh Municipalities Act 1961 and Chhattisgarh Fire and Emergency Services Act 2018 is concerned, it is submitted that prior to the enactment of the Fire and Emergency Services Act 2018, the fire services were managed by respective Municipal Corporation or Municipalities.

After the creation of Chhattisgarh State Fire and Emergency Services Act 2018 of the fire extinguishing appliances and equipments which were under the control of Municipal Corporation and Municipalities has been handed over to the Department of Fire and Emergency Services. However, at the Nagar Palika Parishad and Nagar Panchayat level the fire services are still operating under the administrative control of their Chief Municipal Officer(s) and are not under administrative control of State Fire Services.”

Upon perusal of the affidavit and the documents annexed therewith, it transpires that at present 09 fully constructed fire stations are functional in the districts of Durg, Nava Raipur, Ambikapur, Jagdalpur, Janjgir-Champa, Korba, Raigarh, Rajnandgaon and Kabirdham, while construction is underway at Urla-Siltara and Bilaspur, and tendering process is in progress at Jashpur, Mahasamund, Korea, Dantewada, Kanker, Balodabazar and Dhamtari. In several other districts where fire stations are yet to be established,

	fire services are being temporarily operated from Home Guard premises. The affidavit further discloses that the State presently has 147 fire-fighting vehicles, with additional procurement of 20 vehicles in the financial year 2024-25 and 07 vehicles in 2025-26. It is also evident that the Department of Home has addressed communications dated 10.09.2025 to the District Collectors seeking availability of suitably located land for construction of fire stations, highlighting that sites offered at distant locations adversely affect emergency response time, and the Department of Revenue and Disaster Management has reiterated the said requirement by its subsequent communication dated 02.02.2026 directing allotment of a minimum of two acres of land at appropriate locations. The affidavit additionally clarifies that though, after enactment of the Chhattisgarh Fire and Emergency Services Act, 2018, control over fire-fighting infrastructure has largely been vested in the State Fire and Emergency Services Department, fire services at the level of Nagar Palika
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Parishads and Nagar Panchayats continue to function under the administrative supervision of the respective Chief Municipal Officers.

Mr. Anadi Sharma, learned counsel for respondent No.5 submits that in compliance to the Court's order dated 05.02.2026, Commissioner, Municipal Corporation Bilaspur has filed its personal affidavit, relevant paras of which are reproduced hereinbelow:

"2. It is submitted that, in compliance with the aforesaid direction, the deponent has caused the Chhattisgarh Fire and Emergency Service Act, 2018 (No. 19 of 2018) and the rules/notifications issued thereunder, as are presently available, to be duly examined at the level of Municipal Corporation Bilaspur. It is respectfully submitted that, after the coming into force of the said Act and the institutional restructuring carried out thereunder, the functions relating to fire prevention, fire-fighting, fire and emergency response, and allied statutory responsibilities, which were earlier being discharged by the Municipal

Corporation Bilaspur, now stand vested in and are being discharged by the State Fire and Emergency Services Department and the designated authorities/officers under the said Act.

3. Without in any manner seeking to dilute the concern of this Hon'ble Court regarding fire safety within the limits of Municipal Corporation Bilaspur, it is respectfully submitted that, pursuant to the implementation of the Chhattisgarh Fire and Emergency Service Act, 2018 and order 22.04.2017, issued by the Under Secretary, Urban Administration and Development Department, Naya Raipur, District Raipur, C.G., the entire fire extinguishing system including, but not limited to, infrastructure, equipment, appliances, vehicles, manpower and operational control, which were earlier under the administrative and functional control of Municipal Corporation Bilaspur, have been formally handed over to and are presently under the control, management and supervision of the Department of Fire and Emergency Services of the State

Government and such other authorities as notified under the Act. Copy of the order Dated 22.04.2017 issued by the Under Secretary, Urban Administration and Development Department, Naya Raipur, District Raipur, C.G., is hereby annexed as ANNEXURE R/1.

4. The Municipal Corporation Bilaspur, however, continues to extend full cooperation and coordination to the said Department and the State authorities for augmentation, maintenance and effective functioning of fire and emergency services within its jurisdiction, including but not limited to facilitating land allotment, municipal clearances, provision of basic civic infrastructure and other logistic support as may be required under the said act, from time to time.

5. That the deponent respectfully submits that he has the highest regard and utmost respect for the lawful authority of this Hon'ble Court as well as the orders and directions issued from time to time, and that the Municipal Corporation Bilaspur, remains

fully committed to abide by, cooperate in, and facilitate due compliance of all orders and directions passed by this Hon'ble Court in the present proceedings, within the scope of its statutory powers and functions under the applicable law.”

On perusal of the affidavit and the documents on record, it appears that after enforcement of the Chhattisgarh Fire and Emergency Service Act, 2018 and the Government order dated 22.04.2017, the functions relating to fire prevention, fire-fighting and emergency response have been transferred from the Municipal Corporation Bilaspur to the State Fire and Emergency Services Department, which is now exercising administrative and operational control over the fire-fighting infrastructure, equipment, vehicles and manpower. The Municipal Corporation is, however, continuing to extend necessary coordination and logistical support, including facilitation of land allotment, municipal permissions and civic infrastructure, and has expressed its willingness to comply with the directions of this Court within the scope of its statutory powers.

Learned Amicus Curiae also submits that he has also filed an affidavit, relevant paras of which are reproduced hereinbelow:

“3. That the State of Chhattisgarh has enacted The Chhattisgarh Fire and Emergency Services Act 2016 to run and regulate the Fire Protection Services and the allied matters. A true copy of The Chhattisgarh Fire and Emergency Services Act 2016 is being marked and filed herewith as Annexure A-2.

4. That a bare perusal of the said Act specifically Section 3 mandates that there shall be one Fire and Emergency Service would work for the whole of the State. However, on the ground the situation is entirely different. The Fire Security Services are being operated by different command centers, often leading to delayed co-ordination amongst them resulting in losing very crucial time which could have been utilized for minimizing the Damage caused by the said Fire Incident both in terms of the Lives and Property.

5. That at present State of Chhattisgarh has Four different categories of the Fires Security Services working in the State which are namely;

A. Fire Security Services under the Control of the Urban Local Bodies (As provided in the legal regime prior to 2016 in which Municipality Act governs the same)

B. Fire Security Services under the Control of the Collectors of Certain Districts (Where big Urban Local Bodies does not exist prior to 2016)

C. Fire Security Services under the Control of the Central Govt Department s Like Railways and Under the control of the Central PSUs like NTPC and SECL.

D. Fire Security Services under the Control of the Large Private Industrial Houses like BALCO, Jindal etc. However the said Fire tenders and Staff is seldomly being used for

Public Purpose as the Chhattisgarh Act exempts the same by 2nd Proviso of the Section 3 (1).

6. That Section 3(2) of the Chhattisgarh Act confers the power to the State Govt to make the all the Fire Security Services Man Power and Infra Structure available in the State subject to the Proviso as aforesaid under one Unified Command for better co-ordination and services. However almost 10 years have been passed and yet the Condition of the Fire Services in the State remains un-organized and less effective. Despite best effort, any Notification issued under Section 3(2) of the Chhattisgarh Act could not have been located on the Websites of the State Govt.

7. That Section 5 mandates the creation of the Fire Division, Fire Districts. Fire Sub-Division and Fire Stations in whole of the State for effective reach of the Fire and Emergency Services reach upto rural areas of the State.

8. That Section 9(4) further provides for

appointment of Divisional, District and Station Fire Officer in the Fire Divisions, Districts and Stations established by the State under that Section 9(1). It is noteworthy that the boundaries of the Divisions and Districts would not be necessarily kept as per Revenue Divisions and District so as to enable effective reach of the Fire and Emergency Services to the last mile.

9. That despite the aforesaid legal regime in existence since last 10 years, the implementation on ground is very poor.

10. That as per the affidavit dated 05.02.2026 filed by the State Govt the total number of Fire Brigade Vehicles operating in the State are 145 whereas the number of Fire Tenders available at the Block Level is only 55 making this figure to 200. However the capacity of each fire tender in terms of holding Water is different and ranges from Just 60 Liter to, 350 Liter to 3000 Liter to 6000 Liter. Obviously the other staff on the fire tender also varies.

12. That the Fire Fighting infrastructure is lacking in huge numbers as the entire Bastar Division which is larger than the State of Kerala in terms of Area, is having just 25 Fire Tenders at District HQ and just 4 at Block Level.

13. That the State of Chhattisgarh has not taken effective steps post enactment of The Chhattisgarh Act and not created the Command Structure as mandated by the said Act. Rather the State Govt is more keen to implement later part of the Act which mandates Fire NOC or Clearance for the New Buildings, Complexes etc. Two notification Dated 29.11.2022 has been issued in this regard by the State of Chhattisgarh. A true copy of the Notifications issued on 29.11.2022 is being marked and filed herewith as Annexure A-3.

14. That the Amicus Curiae has interacted with some of the concern persons working on ground and the outcome of the said interaction would suggest that earlier when entire Fire Services were under the Municipal Corporations under the

Municipality Act, there was better co-ordination as one single department was handling the affairs of the services. Post enactment of the Chhattisgarh Act, now the decision making power is with District Home Guard Officer who is designated as Fire officer whereas the entire infrastructure and junior staff is still with Municipal Corporation.”

Perusal of the affidavit goes to show that although the State of Chhattisgarh has enacted the Chhattisgarh Fire and Emergency Services Act with the object of establishing a unified and effective fire protection mechanism across the State, the implementation of the statutory scheme on the ground is alleged to be inadequate. It is averred that despite the mandate under Section 3 for a single State Fire and Emergency Service and the enabling provision under Section 3(2) for bringing manpower and infrastructure under a unified command structure, fire services continue to function under multiple administrative controls, including Urban Local Bodies, District Administration, Central Government undertakings and large private

	industrial establishments, leading to lack of coordination and delay in emergency response. The affidavit further indicate that the statutory framework envisaging creation of Fire Divisions, Districts, Sub-Divisions and Stations, along with appointment of designated fire officers, has not been fully operationalised even after considerable lapse of time. It is also asserted that the existing fire-fighting infrastructure and availability of fire tenders are insufficient in several regions, particularly in geographically large areas such as Bastar Division, thereby affecting the effectiveness of emergency response. The affidavit additionally alleges that while the State has taken steps to enforce regulatory provisions such as requirement of fire safety clearances for buildings, adequate progress has not been made towards establishing the institutional command structure contemplated under the Act, resulting in fragmented functioning and reduced operational efficiency of fire and emergency services.
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It is observed that several places in the State are still without functional fire stations. This Court hopes and trusts that the concerned authorities shall take immediate and effective steps for establishment and operationalisation of fire stations at such locations so as to ensure timely fire and emergency response services.

List the matter again on **04.05.2026**.

Fresh affidavits shall be filed by The Director, Training Operation, Fire and Emergency Services, Home Guard and State Disaster Respondent Force (SDRF) before the next date of hearing, indicating the steps taken, progress made and the proposed timeline for setting up fire stations at the places where the same are presently not available.

Sd/-

(Ravindra Kumar Agrawal)
Judge

Sd/-

(Ramesh Sinha)
Chief Justice