



HIGH COURT OF CHHATTISGARH AT BILASPUR

WPIL No. 2 of 2026

IN THE MATTER OF SUO MOTO PUBLIC INTEREST LITIGATION
versus STATE OF CHHATTISGARH

Order Sheet

<p>04.05.2026</p>	<p>This is an office reference.</p> <p>Heard Mr. Sudeep Shrivastava, learned counsel appointed as Amicus Curae, Mr. Shashank Thakur, learned Additional Advocate General for the State and Mr. Anadi Sharma, learned counsel for respondent No.5.</p> <p>In compliance of the Court's order dated 17.03.2026, the State counsel has filed affidavit by the Director, Training Operation, Fire and Emergency Services, Home Guard and State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) which has been reproduced as under:</p> <p>"In the present Public Interest Litigation initiated <i>suo motu</i> by this Court on the basis of a news report published in Dainik Bhaskar dated 16.01.2026,</p>

highlighting the issue of inadequate fire safety infrastructure in the city of Bilaspur. The said report indicates that despite the lapse of several years, a fully functional fire station has not been established owing to land-related issues and other technical impediments.

(2) The present proceedings arise from the aforesaid news report published in Bilaspur Bhaskar dated 16.01.2025, “अफसरों की लापरवाहरी से 5 साल में नहीं बन सका नया फायर स्टेशन” कई बड़ी घटनाओं के बाद भी जमीन और टेंडर के फेर में सुरक्षा की अनदेखी” which reveals that despite increasing fire incidents in a city having a population of approximately 7.5 lakhs, the authorities have failed to establish a properly equipped fire station. The project entrusted to the Public Works Department (PWD) has remained pending for nearly five years on account of land disputes, technical difficulties, and repeated tendering processes. At present, only a temporary fire station is operational near Kududand water tank, which is inadequate considering the safety requirements of the city. The existing infrastructure suffers from lack of manpower, modern equipment, sufficient water storage, and updated vehicles, thereby adversely affecting emergency response capabilities.

(3) The delay in execution of the project is further attributable to procedural lapses, including failure to

comply with tendering requirements, cancellation and re-issuance of tenders, and lack of coordination between concerned authorities. It is submitted that the site conditions, including marshy land and dumping issues, have also contributed to the delay. Although the project has received administrative approval with a revised cost estimate, the implementation has been hindered due to repeated procedural deficiencies.

(4) Taking into account the facts of the case, this Court had directed the Director General, Home Guards, Civil Defence & Emergency Services and State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), Raipur, to be impleaded as a party respondent and to furnish complete details regarding the number and status of fire stations across the State, along with information pertaining to available fire brigades.

(5) It was further brought to the notice of this Court that tenders for construction of new fire stations had been floated multiple times earlier and an e-procurement tender notice dated 12.01.2026 was issued, fixing 27.01.2026 as the date for opening of bids.

(6) On the last date of hearing, this Court has noted that nine fully constructed fire stations are presently functional in various districts including Durg, Nava Raipur, Ambikapur, Jagdalpur, Janjgir-Champa,

Korba, Raigarh, Rajnandgaon and Kabirdham, while construction is underway at Urla Siltara and Bilaspur, and the tendering process is ongoing in several other districts. The construction work of fire stations is presently underway in districts including 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 the premises of the Home Guards.

(7) It is further submitted that the State presently possesses 147 fire-fighting vehicles, with additional procurement of 20 vehicles during the financial year 2024–25 and 07 vehicles in 2025–26. It is also evident that the Department of Home, vide communication dated 10.09.2025 addressed to the District Collectors, had sought identification and availability of suitably located land for construction of fire stations, emphasizing that locations situated at considerable distances adversely impact emergency response time.

(8) Subsequently, the Department of Revenue and Disaster Management, vide communication dated 02.02.2026, reiterated the said requirement and directed that a minimum of two acres of land be allotted at appropriate and strategically suitable locations.

(9) Following the 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, though municipal authorities continue to function under administrative supervision.

(10) In compliance with the order dated 17.03.2026 passed by this Court, the Director, Fire and Emergency Services, vide communication dated 25.03.2026, addressed the Collectors of Raipur, Manendragarh-Chirmiri-Bharatpur, Narayanpur, Gaurela-Pendra-Marwahi, Sukma, Mohla-Manpur-Ambagarh Chowki, Khairagarh-Chhuikhadan-Gandai, Sarangarh, Kondagaon, Balrampur, Balod, Surajpur, Gariaband, Bijapur, Sakti, Mungeli and Bemetara, requesting them to identify and allot suitable land within their respective districts for establishment of fire stations. It was specifically emphasized that the establishment of fire stations is a matter of utmost priority, and that such stations must be located at strategically suitable sites to ensure unhindered and prompt movement of fire and rescue teams during emergencies and disaster situations, particularly in densely populated areas, through accessible and uncongested routes. It was further directed that the proposed locations should not be situated at a considerable distance from built-up areas so as to minimize response time. A copy of

the said communication dated 25.03.2026 is annexed herewith as DOCUMENT-A.

(11) Despite issuance of the aforesaid communication, no response was received from the concerned District Collectors. Consequently, the Director, Fire and Emergency Services, was constrained to issue a reminder dated 27.04.2026, reiterating the urgent requirement for identification and allotment of suitable land for establishment of fire stations. A copy of the said reminder is annexed herewith as DOCUMENT-B.

(12) It is submitted that, similarly, the Director, Fire and Emergency Services, vide communication dated 27.04.2026, issued directions to the Municipal Authorities of Lormi, Pathariya, Bilha, Kota, Maro, Beila, Saja, Parpodi, Khamariya, Nawagarh, Sarangarh, Pithora, Saraipali, Dantewada, Kirandul, Bacheli, Pandariya, Katghora, Akaltara and Sakti, directing them to ensure that all fire-fighting vehicles and equipment are maintained in proper repair and kept in a fully operational condition, particularly in view of the ensuing summer season.

(13) The Department of Fire and Emergency Services is diligently pursuing compliance of the order dated 17.03.2026 passed by this Court in its true letter and spirit, and is actively coordinating with the concerned District Authorities for early allotment

of land, whereupon the process for construction of fire stations at the identified locations shall be undertaken expeditiously.

(14) In compliance with the order dated 17.03.2026, the Director, Fire and Emergency Services, vide letter dated 25.03.2026, requested various District Collectors to identify and allot suitable land for establishment of fire stations, emphasizing that such locations must ensure prompt accessibility to densely populated areas. In the absence of response from the concerned authorities, a reminder dated 27.04.2026 was issued reiterating the urgency of the matter and the need for expeditious allotment of land. Further directions were issued to Municipal Authorities to ensure that fire-fighting equipment and vehicles are maintained in proper working condition, particularly in view of the approaching summer season when fire incidents are more frequent.

(15) The Department of Fire and Emergency Services is making sincere efforts to comply with the directions of this Court and is actively pursuing the matter with the concerned District Authorities for early allotment of land so that construction of fire stations may commence without further delay.”

From perusal of the above, it is evident that vide letter dated 25.03.2026 the Collectors of 17 districts were

directed to take necessary steps for initiation of construction of fire stations and to identify and provide suitable land on a priority basis. However, no response has been received from any of the said Collectors. Consequently, a reminder dated 27.04.2026 was issued. Despite lapse of more than one month, no reply has been received.

It is further submitted that similar communication dated 25.03.2026 and 27.04.2026 were issued to 20 *Nagar Palikas* and *Nagar Panchayats*, directing them to take necessary action to keep the vehicle in proper working condition; however, no response has been received from them as well.

In view of the aforesaid, one more opportunity is granted to all the concerned Collectors and Municipal bodies to furnish their responses forthwith to the communications issued by the Director, Training Operations, Fire and Emergency Services, Home Guards and State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) dated 25.03.2026 and 27.04.2026 respectively.

The Chief Secretary shall also ensure strict

compliance of the aforesaid communications and to secure prompt responses from all concerned authorities.

Let the matter be listed on 23rd June 2026 and fresh affidavit be filed on the next date of hearing.

Copy of the order be sent to the Chief Secretary by the State counsel for necessary compliance.

Sd/-

(Ravindra Kumar Agrawal)

Judge

Sd/-

(Ramesh Sinha)

Chief Justice