

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF MANIPUR  
AT IMPHAL**

**WP(C) No. 173 of 2026**

Aribam Dhananjoy Singh

***Petitioner***

**Vs.**

State of Manipur and 3 others

***Respondents***

BEFORE

**HON'BLE THE CHIEF JUSTICE MR. M. SUNDAR  
HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE AHANTHEM BIMOL SINGH**

**(ORDER)**

***(Order of the Court was made by M. Sundar, CJ)***

**26.02.2026.**

[1] Mr. Meihoubam Rakesh Singh, learned counsel on record for the writ petitioner is before this Court.

[2] At the outset, it is seen that a unique situation has arisen. In the captioned 'Writ Petition' ('WP' for the sake of brevity), the writ petitioner has primarily sought issue of a writ of *Quo Warranto* qua appointment of R4 (Smt. Nungshitombi Athokpam, aged about 60 years, W/O Sanjenbam Jogendro Singh, a resident of Uripok Bachaspati Leikai, P.O. & P.S. Imphal, Imphal West District, Manipur) as State Information Commissioner, Manipur Information Commission.

[3] Learned counsel submits that the writ petitioner who is a journalist is espousing a public cause, writ petitioner is a public-spirited person and he has filed the captioned WP but the writ petition was filed resorting to Category Code No. '10043' vide Appendix – 22 of 'High Court

of Manipur Rules, 2019' ('said Rules'). Code '**10043**' is for matters pertaining to '**Selection and appointment**'. Learned counsel for WP petitioner very fairly, adverting inter-alia to paragraph 1 of the WP pleadings as well as the pre-WP representation sent by writ petitioner being a representation dated 19.01.2026 (Annexure-A/10) submitted that though the writ petitioner is espousing a public cause, resorting to Public Interest Litigation Code i.e., Code No. '**10194**' may become a hurdle as the captioned matter can be construed as a service matter and the issue of service matter in a PIL may arise. We place on record our appreciation for the fair stand taken by the learned counsel for WP petitioner.

[4] A careful perusal of the WP pleading, the pre-writ petition representation being representation dated 19.01.2026 (Annexure-A/10), the prayer in WP and the nature of the legal grind qua captioned WP bring to light that this is a case of importance and complexity. Therefore, as this Bench is presided by the Chief Justice who is the master of roster, exercising powers under Rule 3(1) and proviso thereof of said Rules, the captioned matter is directed to be listed before Division Bench (DB) presided by Chief Justice. To be noted, Rule 3(1) and the proviso thereof of said Rules makes it clear that listing before Single Bench has an exception and the exception is where the Chief Justice 'otherwise directs'.

[5] In the normal circumstances, such an order would not have been made on the judicial side but as the writ petition has been

numbered and listed before this DB and as the question has been brought to the notice of this court it has become necessary to make this part of instant judicial order today more so as this DB presided by Chief Justice has the benefit of hearing learned counsel on record for the writ petitioner though such orders in the normal course are made by Chief Justice on the administrative side.

[6] It is made clear that the captioned matter is being taken up by DB only owing to the importance and by exercise of powers of Chief Justice under Rule 3 (1) and proviso thereof without expressing any opinion one way or the other as to whether it should be treated as a PIL or not. This question is left open and will be decided as the matter progresses.

[7] List under the same cause list caption 'MOTION' on Monday week i.e., 09.03.2026 (we are saying Monday week owing to the intervening Yaoshang holidays).

[8] List on 09.03.2026.

**JUDGE**

**CHIEF JUSTICE**

*Sushil*