

HIGH COURT OF TRIPURA

A_G_A_R_T_A_L_A

WP(C)(PIL) No.09 of 2020

Court on its own motion

For Respondent(s) : Mr. D. Bhattacharya, G.A.

HON'BLE THE CHIEF JUSTICE MR. AKIL KURESHI

HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE S. TALAPATRA

O_R_D_E_R

11/09/2020

(Akil Kureshi, CJ)

It is a matter of public knowledge that the number of cononavirus cases in the State is steadily increasing and has reached a high figure. The number of deaths related to cononavirus is also on the rise. Recent newspaper reports particularly published in vernacular language have reported the plight of the patients and relatives of those who have been tested positive of the virus. Certain shortcomings in public health care system are projected.

We would not like to be guided solely by these newspaper reports and would like to gather further information from the Government. While recognizing the need to allow the Government to do its duty during these difficult times, this Court is of the opinion that the time has come when the Court needs to make inquiries from the Government with respect to the issues revolving around the handling of coronavirus spread in the State and more particularly of providing health care to those who are tested positive.

Quite apart from the newspaper reports which form part of the compilation of the present proceedings, we also have the official figures of the

hospital beds available in the State capital and in the different districts. A cursory glance at these figures would show that as per the Government declaration, there are in all 2865 hospital beds available across the State for coronavirus patients, of these 240 seem to be available at AGMC and GBP hospital, Agartala. As against this, on the date of publication of this data, there were 279 patients at the said centre. In other words, the number of patients admitted at the said centre was higher than the total number of beds available. Further, in the entire State it appears that there are only 19 ventilators available, all at AGMC and GBP hospital, Agartala. This would imply that all patients with acute breathing problem and who are required to be put on ventilator, would have to be shifted to Agartala. If such a situation develops suddenly, shifting the patient from a remote area would be a challenge. We have also come across a newspaper report published today in Daily Desher Katha describing the plight of a corona patient who took discharge from AGMC and GBP hospital in order to admit himself at ILS hospital, Agartala which is a private hospital, but was refused admission.

These and various other issues require further examination. Under the circumstances, let there be notice to the respondents, returnable for **18th September, 2020**. The respondents shall file reply before the returnable date, particularly providing the following details :

- (i) The number of active corona cases in the State, if possible with district wise break-up.

(ii) The number of corona treatment centres with break-up of which are fully equipped with necessary infrastructure, medicines and medical and paramedical staff.

(iii) Whether there is any private hospital in the State which has been given permission to admit coronavirus patients. If yes, the maximum capacity of such hospital(s) to admit such patients and the treatment charges which these hospitals have been authorized by the Government to collect from the patients.

(iv) Some of the newspaper articles also report lack of communication between the patients who are admitted and their family members. The affidavit, therefore, shall provide the details of steps taken by the administration to ensure that the relatives of the patients are updated about the health condition and the treatment being given to the patient as well as to ensure the communication between the patient and his/her relatives.

(v) The affidavit shall also provide the details of the fund allocation at different Government hospitals treating corona patients. The break-up of the funds available for corona treatment and treatment for other ailments if bifurcated shall be provided.

(vi) The affidavit shall also give the details of availability of essential equipments such as oxygen supply devices, PPE Kits for doctors and paramedical staff etc.

(vii) The affidavit shall also contain details of availability of doctors and paramedical staff at each corona treatment centre and the assessed requirement of such medical and paramedical staff as also the basis on which such assessment has been made by the State.

(viii) We are sure the Government would address to the concerns of the general public as are projected by the print media and take such measures as are necessary to improve the condition in Government treatment centres.

Mr. D. Bhattacharya, learned Government advocate waived notice on behalf of the respondents. A copy of this order may be provided to him immediately for communication to the respondents and for necessary action.

(S. TALAPATRA), J

(AKIL KURESHI), CJ

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