

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JHARKHAND AT RANCHI
W.P.(PIL) No. 1715 of 2025

COURT ON ITS OWN MOTION

Versus

State of Jharkhand & Ors. Respondents

CORAM: **HON'BLE THE CHIEF JUSTICE**
 HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE DEEPAK ROSHAN

For the Petitioner : NA
For the Respondents : Mr. Rajiv Ranjan, A.G.
 Mr. Piyush Chitresh, A.C. to A.G
 Mr. Sachin Kumar, Advocate
 Mr. M.K.Roy, Advocate

2/03.04.2025

Heard the learned Advocate General for the respondents.

2. This Public Interest Litigation came to be registered on the basis of recent power shutdown by the Jharkhand Bijli Vitaran Nigam Limited (for short 'JBVNL') in the City of Ranchi on 01.04.2025 on the occasion of *Sarhul* festival.

3. On this day, the JBVNL which distributes/supplies electricity in the city of Ranchi to it's residents, admittedly shutdown power supply for various periods ranging from 5 to 10 hours between 1 pm and 11 pm in different areas of the Ranchi City as per data placed on record by the learned Advocate General.

4. It cannot be disputed that electricity supply is an essential service in today's world.

5. As the hot summer season has started, stoppage of electricity supply by JBVNL affects the lives of residents of the city more so that of old people, sick people, young children,

pregnant women and students studying for exams. Also businesses need to be shutdown causing loss of revenue to the persons who run the businesses. It will also affect treatment of patients in private and public hospitals.

6. It is contended by the learned Advocate General that this extreme measure of shutting down power supply was felt necessary to avoid injury to people who carry flag-poles in the processions at festivals like the *Sarhul* festival where there is risk of such poles coming into contact with electricity wires and that in the past (in the year 2000) 29 people had died in one such incident.

7. He states that for the upcoming Sri Rama Navami festival on 6.4.2025 and also for Moharrum festival on 6.7.2025, power shut down needs to be done for the aforesaid reason.

8. But the question is whether such extreme measure is necessary.

9. Merely because accidents might happen when one is travelling on the road or by train or in an airline, one does not stop people from using the road, train or airline. All measures must be taken to ensure such accidents do not happen.

10. The State authorities, which gives permission to such processions during festivals or otherwise, must fix an appropriate height/length of such poles/ flags so that they will not come into contact with the electrical wires laid down by the JBVNL.

11. It must inform the organizers of the such processions that it will not permit carrying of long poles/flags beyond the permitted height.

12. This norm needs to be enforced by the State through its Law Enforcement Agencies.

13. Therefore, pending further orders the respondents are directed to immediately fix the height/length of poles/flags which can be carried in the procession and also immediately notify all organisers of processions of the same and ensure that all such organisers comply with this norm.

14. The respondent- JBVNL is further directed not to shut down electricity supply in the manner it was done on 01.04.2025 in future unless such a measure is warranted due to some serious emergency such as extreme bad weather or the like.

15. Responses be filed by all the respondents on 09.04.2025.

16. List on 09.04.2025.

(M.S. Ramachandra Rao, C.J.)

(Deepak Roshan, J.)