

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF UTTARAKHAND AT NAINITAL**  
**Writ Petition (PIL) No. 62 of 2020**

Preetam Singh Panwar

...Petitioner

Versus

Union of India and others

... Respondents

Mr. S.K. Mandal, learned counsel for the petitioner.

Mr. Rakesh Thapliyal, learned Assistant Solicitor General for the Union of India-first respondent.

Mr. Paresh Tripathi, learned Chief Standing Counsel assisted by Mr. Anil Kumar Bisht and Mr. Vikas Pande, learned Standing Counsel and Mr. Suyash Pant, Mr. B.P.S. Mer, Mr. V.S. Rawat and Mr. S.S. Chaudhary, learned Brief Holders for the State of Uttarakhand-respondents 2 and 3.

**Hon'ble Ramesh Ranganathan, C.J.**

**Hon'ble R.C. Khulbe, J.**

Mr. Paresh Tripathi, learned Chief Standing Counsel for the State Government, submits that a report, on behalf of the State Government, has been filed today. Mr. Rakesh Thapliyal, learned Assistant Solicitor General for the Union of India, states that the information received by him is inadequate, and he be granted time till 29.05.2020 to file a detailed report.

2. When we asked him what arrangements have been made for transportation of stranded migrant workers, and others who have registered themselves to be brought back to their homes within the State of Uttarakhand, learned Assistant Solicitor General submits that, from 01.06.2020 onwards, one train would run from Amritsar to Haridwar and back; and another train would run daily from New Delhi to Haridwar and Dehradun and back; and, in all, around 2000 passengers would be transported by train each day.

3. Mr. Paresh Tripathi, learned Chief Standing Counsel for the State Government, would submit that more than 1000 buses are being plied by the State Government to transport stranded migrant workers, and others who have registered themselves, from other States to their respective destinations in the State of Uttarakhand; in all, around 54,000 such stranded persons have already been transported to

their respective destinations within the State of Uttarakhand; all possible steps, to provide succor to these hapless persons, are being taken by the State Government; around 2.3 lakh stranded migrant workers and others have registered themselves to be brought back to the State of Uttarakhand from different parts of the country; and 1,29,000 such stranded migrant workers and others have already come back, leaving around one lakh remaining to be brought back to the State.

4. Transporting merely 2000 persons by train per day would require at least 50 days, from the 01<sup>st</sup> of June, to bring back the remaining one lakh stranded persons from different parts of the country to the State of Uttarakhand during which period they would continue to suffer from lack of food, water and shelter. Failure to take immediate steps to provide adequate transportation facilities, and to introduce more trains and buses, to ply these unfortunate victims, who have lost all means of livelihood during this COVID-19 pandemic, back to their homes, would only result in their continuing to walk thousands of miles, without food, to reach their homes. The indifference exhibited by the haves, to the plight of these have nots who are forced to walk for miles together without food and water (during peak summer when several parts of the country are seeing a record surge in day temperature), is extremely disturbing. **The lackadaisical approach adopted, to ameliorate the plight of these miserable lot, does not show the administration, both at the Centre and in the State, in good light.** The abnormal rise in temperature, in some places beyond 45 degree celsius, may well result in a large number of those, walking back to their homes, suffering from heat stroke some of them fatally. Greater urgency needs to be shown, by both the Centre and the State, to bring back these stranded workers and others, who are walking back to their respective homes in the State of Uttarakhand, by a proper and decent mode of transportation. Immediate measures are also required to be taken to provide them, water, food and shelter enroute till they are transported to their respective destinations within the State.

5. While the inadequate response of the authorities, to their plight, is extremely disconcerting, we accede to the request of the learned Assistant Solicitor General, and defer hearing of this Writ Petition till 29.05.2020 awaiting receipt of the Government of India's report, to enable us to pass a comprehensive order on that day.

6. Post on 29.05.2020 in the daily list.

7. Let a certified copy of this order be issued to the learned counsel for the parties, on payment of the prescribed charges, today itself.

**(R.C. Khulbe, J.)**  
27.05.2020

Rahul

**(Ramesh Ranganathan, C.J.)**  
27.05.2020