

ITEM NO.11

COURT NO.3

SECTION X

S U P R E M E C O U R T O F I N D I A
R E C O R D O F P R O C E E D I N G S

Writ Petition(s)(Criminal) No(s).169/2025

PILA PAHAN @ PEELA PAHAN & ORS.

Petitioner(s)

VERSUS

THE STATE OF JHARKHAND & ANR.

Respondent(s)

FOR ADMISSION

IA No. 100925/2025 - EXEMPTION FROM FILING O.T.

IA No. 100928/2025 - GRANT OF BAIL

IA No. 100927/2025 - GRANT OF BAIL

IA No. 100926/2025 - GRANT OF BAIL

IA No. 100929/2025 - GRANT OF BAIL

Date : 05-05-2025 This matter was called on for hearing today.

CORAM :

HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE SURYA KANT

HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE NONGMEIKAPAM KOTISWAR SINGH

For Petitioner(s) Ms. Fauzia Shakil, AOR
Ms. Tasmiya Taleha, Adv.

For Respondent(s) Ms. Pallavi Langar, AOR
For R.No.1 Mr. Sujeet Kumar Chaubey, Adv.

For R.No.2 Mr. Ambhoj Kumar Sinha, Adv.

UPON hearing the counsel the Court made the following
O R D E R

1. The instant Writ Petition has been filed by four convicts. Out of them, petitioner Nos.1, 2 and 3 were convicted by the Trial Courts under Sections 302 IPC and other related offences and were sentenced to undergo life imprisonment on 12.06.2012, 04.08.2014 and 25.03.2014, respectively.

2. Similarly, petitioner No.4 is a convict under Sections 302 and 346 IPC. He was convicted on 06.09.2018 and sentenced to undergo life imprisonment. All the four petitioners have filed Criminal Appeals bearing numbers 764/2012, 723/2014, 354/2014 and 1169/2018 before the Jharkhand High Court.

3. The instant Writ Petition has been filed, *inter alia*, seeking a direction to the learned High Court for pronouncement of judgments in the above-mentioned Criminal Appeals which, according to the petitioners, were finally heard by a Division Bench of the High Court on 27.04.2022, 05.05.2022, 07.06.2022 and 05.01.2022, respectively.

4. It is in this backdrop that vide order dated 23.04.2025, while issuing notice in IA Nos.100926/2025, 100927/2025, 100928/2025 and 100929/2025 (applications for grant of bail), we directed the Registrar General of the High Court of Jharkhand to file a Status Report in sealed cover in respect of all the judgments, which were reserved more than two months back.

5. In deference thereto, the Registrar General of the High Court of Jharkhand has forwarded a Status Report giving details of the reserved judgments which are more than two months old as on 29.04.2025.

6. The Report reveals that there are 56 matters, including some Criminal Appeals, where a learned Division Bench of the High Court has finally heard the matters on different dates ranging from 04.01.2022 till 16.12.2024 but the final pronouncements are still awaited. There are 11 Single Bench Matters also before another Hon'ble Judge where the judgments are reserved on different dates between 25.07.2024 to 27.09.2024.

7. However, the list of 56 matters, sent by the Registrar General of the Jharkhand High Court, does not contain the Criminal Appeals filed by the petitioners, as mentioned in para 2 of the instant order. The Report has been opened in the Court and perused. For the time being, the Report shall be kept in sealed cover.

8. We also find that the Indian Express - a daily newspaper has today reported under the caption "After SC rap, HC decides 75 criminal appeals in a week", that the Jharkhand High Court has decided 75 Criminal Appeals in a week after this Court sought information vide order dated 23.04.2025. The news item published in the newspaper - Indian Express, dated 05.05.2025, be kept on record.

9. At this stage, we deem it appropriate to seek the following information:

(i) The Registrar General of the High Court is directed to furnish a list of 75 Criminal Appeals, where the judgments have been pronounced by the High Court meanwhile. The list shall indicate the date(s) when the judgments were reserved along with soft copies of the judgments pronounced by the High Court.

(ii) What is the fate of the Criminal Appeals filed by the petitioners herein, the details whereof are given in para 2 of the instant order?

10. Having perused the Report sent by the Registrar General of the Jharkhand High Court, we deem it apposite to seek such Reports from all the High Courts. Consequently, we direct the Registrar General of all the High Courts to submit a Report in respect of those cases where the judgments were reserved on or before 31.01.2025 and where the pronouncement of judgments is still awaited. The Report shall contain the Criminal Appeals and Civil Matters separately with a further specification as to whether it is a Division Bench Matter or a Single Bench Matter. The composition of Benches shall also be disclosed. The Registrar General of the High Courts shall furnish the requisite information within four weeks.

11. The Registry is directed to send a copy of this order to the Registrar General of all the High Courts for information and necessary compliance.

12. List the main case on 21.07.2025.

13. However, the prayer for granting bail to the petitioners shall be considered on 13.05.2025.

14. Meanwhile, we request the Jharkhand State Legal Services Authority to take immediate necessary steps to provide legal assistance in terms of the decision taken by the Supreme Court Legal Services Committee, and ensure that the convicts like the petitioners are not left remediless.

15. The Jharkhand State Legal Services Authority shall ensure that appropriate proceedings are initiated in all the 10 matters, the details whereof has been separately furnished to the Secretary of the Supreme Court Legal Services Authority, for the purpose of seeking suspension of their sentence and consequently, to seek their release on bail during the pendency of their appeals.

(SATISH KUMAR YADAV)
ADDITIONAL REGISTRAR

(PREETHI T.C.)
ASSISTANT REGISTRAR