



**IN THE HIGH COURT OF KARNATAKA, AT
DHARWAD
DATED THIS THE 29TH DAY OF AUGUST, 2025
BEFORE
THE HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE SURAJ GOVINDARAJ
WRIT PETITION NO. 101061 OF 2025 (GM-RES)**

BETWEEN:

VIJAYKUMAR M. SHEELVANT,
AGE: 63 YEAS, OCC: ADVOCATE,
R/O: PLOT NO.10, 1ST CROSS,
NADGIR PARK, SADHANKERI,
DHARWAD – 580 001.

...PETITIONER

(BY SRI. M. L. VANTI, ADVOCATE)

AND:

1. THE STATE OF KARNATAKA,
REPT. BY THE PRINCIPAL SECRETARY,
HOME DEPARTMENT, VIDHANASOUDA,
BANGALORE – 560 001.
2. THE UNDER SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT,
(POLICE SERVICE-B), HOME ADMINISTRATION,
KAVERI BHAVAN, BENGALURU.
3. DIRECTOR GENERAL AND INSPECTOR
GENERAL OF POLICE, KARNATAKA STATE,
BANGALORE – 01.
4. I ADDL, SOLICITOR AND EX-OFFICIO,
DEPUTY SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT,
HOME DEPARTMENT VIDHANASOUDHA,
BENGALURU – 560 001.

...RESPONDENTS

(BY SRI. SHARAD V. MAGADUM, AGA)





THIS WRIT PETITION IS FILED UNDER ARTICLES 226 AND 227 OF THE CONSTITUTION OF INDIA PRAYING TO ISSUE A WRIT IN THE NATURE OF MANDAMUS OR ANY OTHER APPROPRIATE WRIT, ORDER OR DIRECTIONS DIRECTING THE RESPONDENTS TO PAY THE PROFESSIONAL FEES OF THE PETITIONER AS PER BILL NO. I AND II AMOUNTING TO RS. 44,59,500/-, AS PER ANNEXURE-E DATED 16/11/2023 ALONG WITH 18% INTEREST TILL REALISATION, TO MEET ENDS OF JUSTICE AND ETC.,

THIS WRIT PETITION HAVING BEEN HEARD AND RESERVED ON 18.08.2025, COMING ON FOR PRONOUNCEMENT OF ORDERS THIS DAY, COURT MADE THE FOLLOWING:

CAV ORDER

(PER: THE HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE SURAJ GOVINDARAJ)

1. The petitioner, who is a former State Public Prosecutor practising in the High Court of Karnataka, more particularly at the Dharwad Bench, is before this Court seeking the following reliefs:
 - i. *Issue a Writ in the nature of Mandamus or any other appropriate writ, order or directions directing the respondents to pay the Professional Fees of the petitioner as per bill No. I and II amounting to Rs. 44,59,500/-, as per Annexure-E dtd. 16/11/2023 along with 18% interest till realisation, to meet ends of justice.*
 - ii. *Grant such other relief's as this Hon'ble Court deems fit in circumstances of the case.*



2. The second respondent, Home Department, taking into consideration that the petitioner is a State Public Prosecutor, appointed him as a Special Public Prosecutor to conduct a case on behalf of the Government arising out of Crime No.63/2022, registered by the Old Hubballi Police Station, popularly known as the Hubballi Riots Case, vide appointment letter dated 17.05.2022. A notification towards that effect was also issued, stating that his emoluments would be in terms of the Government Order bearing No. ಒಇ 106 ಪಪಿಇ 2019(ಇ) dated 22.12.2020, at Annexure-A. The said notification is reproduced hereunder for easy reference:

ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ:ಒಇ 141 ಪಪಿಇ 2022(ಇ)

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರ್ಕಾರ ಸಚಿವಾಲಯ,
ವಿಧಾನ ಸೌಧ,
ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು, ದಿನಾಂಕ: 17.05.2022

ಅಧಿಸೂಚನೆ

ಶ್ರೀ ವಿಜಯಕುಮಾರ ಮಹೇಶ್ವರಪ್ಪ ಸೀಲವಂತ, ವಕೀಲರು, ಧಾರವಾಡ ಇವರನ್ನು ದಂಡ ಪ್ರಕ್ರಿಯಾ ಸಂಹಿತೆ 1975ರ ಕಲಂ:24ರ ಉಪಕಲಂ(8)ರಡಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಪ್ರದತ್ತವಾದ ಅಧಿಕಾರವನ್ನು ಚಲಾಯಿಸುತ್ತಾ, (ಕೇಂದ್ರ ಅಧಿನಿಯಮ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ:2/1974) ದಂಡ ಪ್ರಕ್ರಿಯಾ ಸಂಹಿತೆಯು ತಿದ್ದುಪಡಿಯಾದಂತೆ, (1978ರ ತಿದ್ದುಪಡಿ ಅಧಿನಿಯಮ) ಹಳೇಹುಬ್ಬಳ್ಳಿ ಪೊಲೀಸ್ ಠಾಣೆಯ ಅಪರಾಧ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ:63/2022ರ ಪ್ರಕರಣದಲ್ಲಿ ಸರ್ಕಾರದ ಪರವಾಗಿ ಸಂಬಂಧಪಟ್ಟ ಮಾನ್ಯ ಜಿ.ಎಂ.ಎಫ್.ಸಿ ಮತ್ತು ಸತ್ರ ನ್ಯಾಯಾಲಯದಲ್ಲಿ ಹಾಜರಾಗಲು ಮತ್ತು ಪ್ರಕರಣವನ್ನು ನಡೆಸಲು ವಿಶೇಷ ಸರ್ಕಾರಿ ಅಭಿಯೋಜಕರನ್ನಾಗಿ ಮುಂದಿನ ಆದೇಶದವರೆಗೆ ನೇಮಿಸಿದೆ.



NC: 2025:KHC-D:10989
WP No. 101061 of 2025

ವಿಶೇಷ ಸರ್ಕಾರಿ ಅಭಿಯೋಜಕರ ಸಂಭಾವನೆ/ವೆಚ್ಚವನ್ನು ಸರ್ಕಾರದ ಆದೇಶ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: ಒಇ 106 ಪಿಪಿಇ 2019, ದಿನಾಂಕ: 22.12.2020 ರನ್ವಯ ನಿಯಮಾನುಸಾರ ಪರಿಶೀಲಿಸಿ ಮುಂದಿನ ಅಗತ್ಯ ಕ್ರಮಕೈಗೊಳ್ಳುವಂತೆ ಮಹಾ ನಿರ್ದೇಶಕರು ಮತ್ತು ಆರಕ್ಷಕ ಮಹಾ ನಿರೀಕ್ಷಕರು, ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ಇವರಿಗೆ ಸೂಚಿಸಿದೆ.

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ರಾಜ್ಯಪಾಲರ ಆದೇಶಾನುಸಾರ
ಮತ್ತು ಅವರ ಹೆಸರಿನಲ್ಲಿ,

Sd/-

(ಬಾಣದರಂಗಯ್ಯ.ಎನ್.ಆರ್.)

ಸರ್ಕಾರದ ಅಧೀನ ಕಾರ್ಯದರ್ಶಿ,

(ಪೊಲೀಸ್ ಸೇವೆಗಳು-ಬಿ),

ಒಳಾಡಳಿತ ಇಲಾಖೆ

ದೂರವಾಣಿ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: 22033294

3. Subsequently, on 03.06.2022, the fourth respondent, Deputy Secretary to Government, Home Department, appointed the petitioner as a Special Public Prosecutor to conduct cases on behalf of the Government in Criminal Petition Nos.101469-2022 - 101480-2022, pending on the file of the High Court of Karnataka, Dharwad Bench, which in fact arose from Crime No.63/2022-74/2022, as also all cases arising out of Crime No.63/2022 stating that the remuneration shall be as per the Government Order No.HD 4948 HCP.2 2009 dated 25.08.2020, vide Annexure-B. The said notification is reproduced hereunder for easy reference:



No:HD:4136:HCP-1:2021.

Karnataka Government Secretariat,
Vidhana Soudha,
Bengaluru, Dated: 03-06-2022.

NOTIFICATION

In exercise of the powers conferred by the proviso to sub-section (8) of section 34 of the code of Criminal Procedure 1975 (Central Act. No.2 of 1974) as amended by the Karnataka Law Officers (Appointment Conditions of Services) Rules 1977, Sri Vijaykumar Maheshwarappa Sheelvant, Advocate, Dharwad, is hereby appointed as a Special Public Prosecutor for conducting Crl.Pet.Nos. 101469/2022 - 101480/2022 - on the file of Hon'ble High Court of Karnataka, Dharwad Bench, and any case/s arising out of Crime Nos.63/2022-74/2022, registered by the Old Hubballi P.S., Hubballi on behalf of the State of Karnataka.

Remuneration of the above said Special Public Prosecutor shall be as per the Government Order No. HD 4948 HCP.2 2009, Dated: 25-08-2020.

By Order and in the name of the
Governor of Karnataka

Sd/-
(VIJAYALAXMI GHANAPUR)
I Additional Solicitor and Ex. Officio,
Deputy Secretary to Government,
HOME DEPARTMENT.

4. In terms thereof, the petitioner alleges that 4 bills were raised, Bills no 3 and 4 were paid but Bills no.1 and 2



were not paid, and it is in that background that the aforesaid reliefs are sought for.

5. Sri.M. L. Vanti, learned counsel for the petitioner would submit that;

5.1. Initially the appointment was made to prosecute on behalf of the State in Crime No.63/2022. Subsequently, on the criminal petitions being filed, the scope of representation on the part of the petitioner was enlarged to that before the High Court as also any other matter arising out of Crime No.63/2022, and the emoluments in terms of the second notification were fixed as per the Government Order bearing No.HD 4948 HCP.2/2009, dated 25.08.2020, and as such, although the earlier emoluments fixed in the notification dated 17.05.2022 were under a different Government Order, the subsequent notification overriding the earlier notification



requires remuneration to be paid in terms of the Government Order dated 25.08.2020.

5.2. The petitioner has conducted all the matters assigned to him before the Magistrate Courts in the Sessions Court at Hubballi, City Civil Sessions Judge and Special Court for NIA cases at Bengaluru, as also the High Court of Karnataka both at the Principal Bench at Bengaluru and the Dharwad Bench on several occasions, and thereafter he tendered his resignation on 13.06.2023.

5.3. The bills which have been submitted have been cleared only in respect of those pertaining to the appearance before the High Court of Karnataka at the Principal Bench and Dharwad Bench. The bills raised as regards appearance before the District Court at Hubballi, Additional City Civil and Sessions Judge, Special Court for NIA cases have not been cleared.



- 5.4. In that background, the petitioner had sent a reminder on 07.08.2024. A further request was made on 14.08.2024. Though the payments towards the bills raised for appearance before the High Court of Karnataka Principal Bench and Dharwad Bench had already been made, the respondents once again paid the said amount. Noticing the mistake on the part of the respondents, the petitioner immediately informed the respondents about the same and returned the amounts by cheque bearing No.000030, dated 27.08.2024, and requested the respondents to make payment of the other bills, that is, Bill No.1 and 2, relating to the appearances before other Courts.
- 5.5. No action having been taken, another reminder was issued on 12.12.2024. The petitioner has been following up with the respondents for payment, which has not been made. M. L. Vanti



submits that a direction be issued to the respondents to make payment of the amounts as per Bill Nos . 1 and 2.

6. Sri.Sharad Magadam, learned AGA, submits that:

6.1. There is a distinction between the notification at Annexure-A and Annexure-B, inasmuch as the notification at Annexure-A relates to the proceedings arising out of Crime No.63/2022, as regards which the emoluments have to be paid as per the Government Order dated 22.12.2020. It is only in regard to the appearance before the High Court of Karnataka at Principal Bench and the Dharwad Bench under the second notification that the Government Order dated 25.08.2020 is applicable. As such, the respondents are willing to make payment on Bills No. 1 and 2 in accordance with the notification at Annexure-A and the Government Order dated 22.12.2020, rather than the Government Order dated



25.08.2020. Therefore, given four weeks' time, the said bills will be processed in that manner.

6.2. His further submission is that the petition having been filed virtually for recovery of money, the petitioner ought to have approached the court of appropriate jurisdiction for such recovery, and a direction by way of mandamus cannot be issued in the present matter.

7. Heard Sri.M.L.Vanti, learned counsel for the petitioner and Sri.Sharad Magdum, learned AGA for the State. Perused the papers.

8. The points that would arise for determination in the present matter are:

- i. Whether the writ petition is maintainable for the reliefs sought?***
- ii. Whether the notification at Annexure-B would override the notification at Annexure-A, or, are they required to be treated separately?***
- iii. What order?***



9. I answer the above points as under:

10. Answer to point No.(i): Whether the writ petition is maintainable for the reliefs sought?

10.1. Though the learned AGA seeks to contend that the writ petition is not maintainable and a recovery suit has to be filed, I am unable to agree with the said submission.

10.2. A notification having been issued for appointment of the petitioner to appear before various courts, as regards which emoluments have been agreed to be paid as per the applicable government orders, I am of the considered opinion that, firstly, the respondents being state authorities, secondly, the aspect involved in the present matter relating to discharge of public duties inasmuch as the petitioner was engaged as a Special Public Prosecutor to defend the State in the Hubballi Riots Case, which is of seminal importance, the action of both appointment and



the discharge of functions by the petitioner are in the nature of discharge of public duties, and any action or inaction in relation thereto would be amenable for writ jurisdiction.

10.3. Though the claim may be one for money, as regards the bills which have been raised by the petitioner, the petitioner has represented the State before the various courts as a Special Public Prosecutor. In that background, I am of the opinion that the petitioner, also acting as an officer of the Court, the respondents were duty bound to make payment of the due amounts as agreed upon.

10.4. Thus, insofar as the Advocate General. Additional Advocate Generals. Special Public Prosecutors, Additional Public Prosecutors, Government Advocates, or High Court Government Pleaders are concerned, I am of the opinion that, they representing the State, any claim made by them



against the State or a department of the State, could be considered by this Court while exercising writ jurisdiction under Article 226 of the Constitution of India.

11. Answer to point No.(ii) Whether the notification at Annexure-B would override the notification at Annexure-A, or, are they required to be treated separately?

11.1. The notifications at Annexure-A and Annexure-B have been reproduced hereinabove. The notification at Annexure-A is dated 17.05.2022. The notification of Annexure-B is a subsequent one dated 03.06.2022. The earlier notification at Annexure-A related to the proceedings arising out of Crime No.63/2022, whereas under notification at Annexure-B, the scope has been enlarged for conducting Criminal Petition Nos.101469/2022 – 101480/2022, and any case arising out of Crime Nos.63/2022 – 74/2022 registered by the Old Hubballi Police Station.



- 11.2. The notification at Annexure-B being ex facie subsequent, in my considered opinion, the said notification would, by its very nature and contents, supersede the earlier notification at Annexure-A dated 17.05.2022. The artificial distinction sought to be made out by the learned Government Advocate that both Annexure-A and Annexure-B would continue to apply, since Annexure-A relates to cases arising out of Crime No.63/2022, whereas the notification of Annexure-B relates to the proceedings before the High Court of Karnataka, Dharwad Bench, cannot be accepted. Inasmuch as under both the notifications, it is categorically indicated that the petitioner has been appointed as a Special Public Prosecutor to conduct cases arising out of Crime Nos . 63/2022 - 74/2022.
- 11.3. A crime number by itself is not a case. A crime number is registered in furtherance of an FIR by



the jurisdictional police station, and in this case, the Old Hubballi Police Station, Hubballi. It is thereafter that the proceedings are taken up before the Magistrate or the Sessions Court, as the case may be, and there may be proceedings arising out of the said crime number before the High Court for bail, quashing, appeal, revision, or the like.

11.4. Thus, though the earlier notification was relating to cases arising out of Crime No.63/2022, subsequently the Government of Karnataka, taking into account the gravity of the matter, as also the need for appointing one Special Public Prosecutor in all matters, had issued the notification at Annexure-B dated 03.06.2022.

11.5. In that view of the matter, I am of the categorical opinion that the notification at Annexure-B dated 03.06.2022 supersedes the notification at Annexure-A dated 17.05.2022.



11.6. One other aspect that is required to be looked into is that, in terms of Annexure-A, the emoluments were required to be paid as per the Government Order dated 22.12.2020, and in terms of Annexure-B, emoluments are required to be paid as per the Government Order dated 25.08.2020. That is, the Government Order dated 25.08.2020 was in existence prior to the Government Order dated 22.12.2020 found reference in Annexure-A dated 17.05.2022. It is not that the Government Order dated 25.08.2020 is subsequent to the notification dated 17.05.2022. The said Government Order was always in existence.

11.7. Thus, when Annexure-A was issued, it is apparent that Respondent No.2 thought it fit to apply the Government Order dated 22.12.2020 to such appointment, but when the notification at Annexure-B was issued, Respondent No.4



consciously applied the Government Order dated 25.08.2020 to all the appearances of the petitioner relating to cases arising out of Crime No.63/2022.

11.8. Thus, ex-facie it is evident that there is a choice made by Respondent No.4 to apply the Government Order dated 25.08.2020, instead of the Government Order dated 22.12.2020, to any action taken by the petitioner as a Special Public Prosecutor and the bills raised in relation thereto post the second notification at Annexure-B dated 03.06.2022.

11.9. The reason for the same is also not far to see, inasmuch as initially, when Crime No.63/2022 was registered, it could mean that the prosecution would have to take place before the Magistrate or the Sessions Court at Hubballi, whereas, once the subsequent proceedings had been initiated and the second notification



covered any cases relating to Crime Nos.63/2022 – 74/2022, it required the petitioner as a Special Public Prosecutor to appear before the High Court of Karnataka, Principal Bench, Dharwad Bench, before the Courts at Bengaluru, the Special Courts, etc., which would require a considerable amount of time to be spent by the petitioner on travel, thereby leading to the petitioner losing out on other matters during that travel.

11.10. Therefore, I am of the categorical opinion that the second notification at Annexure-B dated 03.06.2022, having been issued after considering all aspects and making the Government Order dated 25.08.2020 applicable, any bills raised by the petitioner post 03.06.2022 would have to be in terms of the Government Order dated 25.08.2020 and processed by the respondents accordingly.



11.11. The conduct of the petitioner is also blemishless, inasmuch as, there being double payment for bill Nos.3 and 4, the petitioner, though could have adjusted the double payment towards bill Nos.1 and 2 which are still pending, knowing about the process of approval and disbursal of payments by governmental authorities and the accounting made by them, had returned back the double payment in the fond hope of bill Nos.1 and 2 being cleared. However, shockingly, this was not the case, and the respondents have taken a stand which does not conform to the notification at Annexure-B.

11.12. In that view of the matter, I answer point No.(ii) by holding that the notification at Annexure-B supersedes Annexure-A, and as such, any bills raised post 03.06.2022 would have to be paid in terms of the Government Order dated



25.08.2020, which includes the unpaid bill Nos .
1 and 2.

12. General directions.

12.1. The actions on the part of Advocate General. Additional Advocate Generals. Special Public Prosecutors, Additional Public Prosecutors, Government Advocates, or High Court Government Pleaders, etc., are very important in the discharge of judicial functions and for a proper running of the justice system, in which these officers appointed by the Government to represent the Government play a very important role.

12.2. Any bills which are raised by them would be required to be paid at the earliest so that competent and able persons could take up such appointments. In the present case, the bills of the petitioner, which have been raised way back on 16.11.2023, have remained unpaid.



12.3. Insofar as a private practitioner is concerned, if the bills of a private practitioner are not paid, the private practitioner could return the file and refuse to continue to appear in the matter, as also retain a lien on account of such non-payment. Such an option is not available to an advocate appointed by the Government.

12.4. This matter was adjourned on multiple occasions to enable the learned Additional Government Advocate to produce a **comprehensive statement detailing the process, procedure, and guidelines** presently followed for:

12.4.1. Allocation and nomination of matters to Government Advocates and Public Prosecutors;

12.4.2. Raising of bills for appearances and upon disposal of matters;

12.4.3. Scrutiny, verification, and approval of bills;



12.4.4. Processing and sanction of payments to the concerned stakeholders.

12.5. Despite repeated opportunities, only truncated and incomplete details have been furnished. Upon examination of these documents and submissions made, this Court observes as follows:

12.5.1. The existing system is **entirely manual**, lacking any centralised or automated workflow;

12.5.2. There are **unnecessary delays** at each stage of allocation, scrutiny, and payment processing;

12.5.3. There is **no unified digital record** of disposed matters handled by each stakeholder, impeding policy decision-making and filing of appeals;

12.5.4. There is **no automated validation or calculation** of amounts payable, leading to



inconsistencies, disputes and litigation before this court;

12.5.5. There is no outer time limit fixed for processing and payment of bills which results in undue delay.

12.5.6. Lack of integration between the current manual system and the **Case and Court Management System (CCMS)** results in duplication of work and loss of transparency.

12.6. These systemic shortcomings have **directly contributed** to the present dispute, as also persistent delay in processing and payments of all the other law officers indicated supra, and have the potential to erode efficiency and public confidence in the justice delivery mechanism.

12.7. In order to remedy these deficiencies and modernise the administrative processes, it is hereby **directed** that the Principal Secretary



(Law), in close coordination with the Principal Secretary, Department of E-Governance, Principal Secretary Finance and the heads of such other departments as are connected with the present matter shall **design, develop, and fully implement a secure, role-based, workflow-driven application.**

12.8. In this regard an “e-Office” to be implemented and all stakeholders to be onboarded, the e-office would also have to be integrated with CCMS.

12.9. The platform shall **mandatorily onboard** all the following categories of stakeholders:

12.9.1. Law Secretariat Officers (administrative and decision-making wings);

12.9.2. Advocate General’s Office, including administrative, accounts, and liaison sections;



- 12.9.3. Additional Advocate Generals and their offices;
- 12.9.4. Government Advocates and Additional Government Advocates;
- 12.9.5. High Court Government Pleaders and Assistant Government Pleaders;
- 12.9.6. Special Public Prosecutors, Additional Public Prosecutors, and Assistant Public Prosecutors;
- 12.9.7. Advocates appointed for specialised subject areas or cases by the Government;
- 12.9.8. Concerned Officers of the Finance Department.
- 12.9.9. Any other functionary involved from **allocation to final disbursement** of payments.
- 12.10. Apart from the general features of e-office, following customisations to be effected either as part of e-office or as an independent system. The



customisation shall not be a mere document management solution but a **comprehensive digital platform** capable of end-to-end automation of the entire lifecycle, from allocation of matters to final payment and record-keeping with date and time stamps and where necessary QR codes.

12.11. The e-Office platform shall be designed with **mandatory features** to ensure transparency, accountability, and real-time monitoring. These shall include:

12.12. **Allocation and Nomination:**

12.12.1. Automated and auditable allocation of cases based on workload, expertise, and conflict checks;

12.12.2. Electronic issuance of authorisations for representation;

12.13. **Bill Raising and Digital Submission:**



12.13.1. Online submission of invoices for appearance and disposal fees;

12.13.2. Standardised digital bill formats with automated pre-check validations with Cause lists and order sheets;

12.14. **Scrutiny and Approval Workflow:**

12.14.1. with time-stamped approvals and automatic escalation for delays;

12.14.2. Real-time dashboards showing bills pending at each scrutiny level;

12.14.3. Multi-level digital scrutiny of bills

12.15. **Payments and Settlement:**

12.15.1. End-to-end tracking of payment approvals and fund release;

12.15.2. Integration with treasury systems for direct, timely disbursement;

12.16. **Data and Records Management:**



12.16.1. Centralised repository of all matters handled, searchable by advocate, case type, and status;

12.16.2. Digital reports for policy planning and consideration of appeals;

12.17. Automation Tools:

12.17.1. Built-in digital calculator for automatic computation of payable amounts;

12.17.2. AI-based anomaly detection to flag duplicate or excessive billing;

12.18. Notifications and Communication:

12.18.1. SMS/email/app notifications for bill status updates and compliance reminders;

12.18.2. Secure messaging channel between stakeholders and administrative officers;

12.19. Integration with CCMS:

12.19.1. Automated fetching of final orders/judgments in each matter;



12.19.2. Synchronisation of disposed matter records
for appeal considerations.

12.20. To ensure structured development and avoid
disruption, implementation shall follow these
phased timelines:

12.21. **Phase I – Process Mapping and
Requirements Gathering (4 weeks):**

- 12.21.1. Document existing processes;
- 12.21.2. identify gaps and redundancies;
- 12.21.3. Finalise system specifications and or
Functional requirements.

12.22. **Phase II – System Design and Development
(8 weeks):**

- 12.22.1. Develop prototype modules for allocation,
billing, scrutiny, and payments;
- 12.22.2. Security hardening and role-based access
controls.

12.23. **Phase III – Pilot Testing (8 weeks):**



12.23.1. Limited deployment with select Government
Advocates and support staff;

12.23.2. User acceptance testing and feedback
refinement.

12.24. Phase IV – Statewide Rollout (12 weeks):

12.24.1. Gradual onboarding of all stakeholders;

12.24.2. Migration of manual records into the
system;

12.24.3. Mandatory use of the platform for all new
matters.

**12.25. Phase V – Full Integration and Advanced
Analytics (16 weeks):**

12.25.1. Integration with CCMS and State Treasury
systems;

12.25.2. Implementation of advanced analytics and
audit dashboards.

12.26. A **High-Level Steering Committee** shall be
constituted within **two (2) weeks**, chaired by
the Principal Secretary (Law) and comprising:



- 12.26.1. Principal Secretary, E-Governance Department;
 - 12.26.2. A nominee of the Law Department
 - 12.26.3. A nominee of the Finance Department
 - 12.26.4. Advocate General or nominee;
 - 12.26.5. One Senior Government Advocate
 - 12.26.6. One Senior Prosecutor
 - 12.26.7. IT expert.
 - 12.26.8. Such other persons that the Principal Secretaries and Learned Advocate General deem necessary to be included.
- 12.27. The Steering Committee shall:
- 12.27.1. Meet fortnightly to review progress and remove bottlenecks;
 - 12.27.2. Approve design specifications and vendor selection;
 - 12.27.3. Ensure cybersecurity and data protection compliance;



12.27.4. File bi-monthly status reports before this Court indicating milestone achievements and any delays.

12.28. Until the full e-Office customisation is deployed, all stakeholders shall **digitally upload bills and supporting documents** to a secure, interim repository managed by the Law Department.

12.29. No bill shall remain unprocessed for more than **30 days**, and delays shall be automatically flagged in the repository for review by the Steering Committee.

12.30. A comprehensive **Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)** shall be drafted and filed before this Court within **four (4) weeks**, covering:

12.30.1. Workflow steps and timelines for each stage (allocation to payment);

12.30.2. Responsibilities of each stakeholder;



- 12.30.3. Data entry, validation, and audit mechanisms;
 - 12.30.4. Escalation matrix for delayed actions;
 - 12.30.5. Protocols for handling disputes and appeals in billing matters;
 - 12.30.6. Cybersecurity measures for data integrity and privacy.
- 12.31. The platform shall maintain a **tamper-proof audit trail** for every action taken.
- 12.32. An **independent third-party audit** shall be commissioned annually to review system integrity, billing accuracy, and compliance with SOP timelines.
- 12.33. The Principal Secretary (Law) shall personally supervise the execution of these directions.
13. In the above circumstances, I pass the following:

ORDER

- i. Writ petition is **allowed**.



- ii. A mandamus is issued, directing the respondents to make payment of the bills Nos.1 and 2 in terms of the notification dated 03.06.2022, and the Government Order dated 25.08.2020, within a period of four weeks from the date of receipt of a copy of this order.
- iii. Though the above matter is disposed of, re-list on **24.09.2025** to report compliance with the General Directions.

Sd/-
(SURAJ GOVINDARAJ)
JUDGE

gab/CT-ASC
List No.: 1 Sl No.: 124