

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JHARKHAND AT RANCHI

W.P.(Cr.) No. 639 of 2026

Steel Authority of India Limited, Bokaro Steel Plant, a company registered under the Companies Act, 1956 having its registered office at Lodhi Road, P.O. & P.S. Lodhi Road, District New Delhi, through its General Manager (Law) and Constituent Attorney, John Tapan Kongari, aged about 59 years, son of Late P.L. Kongari, working for gain as General Manager Law, (SAIL) having its office at Ispat Bhawan, Bokaro Steel Plant, P.O. and P.S. Bokaro Steel City, District Bokaro, Jharkhand.

... .. Petitioner

Versus

1. The State of Jharkhand through Chief Secretary, having its office at Project Building, Dhurwa, P.O. Dhurwa, P.S. Jagannathpur, District Ranchi.
2. Deputy Commissioner, Bokaro, having its office Bokaro Collectorate, P.O. & P.S. Bokaro Steel City, District Bokaro, Jharkhand.
3. Sub Divisional Magistrate, Chas Bokaro, having its office Chas, P.O. & P.S. Chas, District Bokaro, Jharkhand.
4. Superintendent of Police, Bokaro, having its office at Bokaro, P.O. & P.S. Bokaro Steel City, District Bokaro, Jharkhand.
5. Officer-in-Charge, B.S. City Police Station having its office at B.S. City, P.O. & P.S. B.S. City, District Bokaro, Jharkhand.
6. Officer-in-Charge Marafari Police Station, having its office Marafari, P.O. & P.S. Marafari, District Bokaro, Jharkhand.
7. Officer-in-Charge Harla Police Station, having its office Harla, P.O. & P.S. Harla, District Bokaro, Jharkhand.
8. Officer-in-Charge Sector-IV Police Station Bokaro, having its office Sector-IV, Bokaro, P.O. & P.S. Sector-IV, District Bokaro, Jharkhand.
9. Smt. Sweta Singh, MLA Bokaro, wife of Mr. Sangram Singh, resident of Sector-III, P.O. & P.S. B.S. City, Bokaro, District Bokaro, Jharkhand.
10. Visthapit Apprentice Sang (VAS) through its General Secretary, through its Central President Niwaran Diggar, son of not known to the petitioner having office at rehabilitation area Tupkadih, P.O. & P.S. Tupkadih, District Bokaro, Jharkhand.

... .. Respondents

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE SUJIT NARAYAN PRASAD

For the Petitioner	: Mr. Indrajit Sinha, Advocate [Through VC] Mr. Bibhash Sinha, Advocate Mr. Rishav Raj, Advocate
For the Respondents	: Mr. Jai Prakash, AAG-IA [Through VC]

02/Dated: 18th October, 2026

1. The instant writ petition has been notified for its hearing during ensuing Puja holidays. The Court is closed for Puja Holidays and is to reopen on 26.10.2026.
2. The background of notifying this case is that a letter has been sent by the learned counsel representing the Bokaro Steel Limited, a unit under the Steel Authority of India Limited by addressing the learned Registrar General of this Court that a situation of complete blockade has been created at all the gates of the Bokaro Steel Plant by the local MLA of Bokaro, along with agitators of the Visthapit Apprentice Sang (VAS). The situation was warranted due to their interruption caused in entry and exit of the employees, maintenance staff, raw materials, and essential supplies have been severely obstructed. These instances had created jeopardy in the continuous operation of the plant smoothly.
3. It has also been reported therein that the plant has never been shut down since its inception and that any forced shutdown, without the procedure of at least seven days, would risk the solidification of approximately 12,000 tons of molten steel in the blast furnaces, causing equipment damage running into thousands of crores of rupees, besides posing serious environmental hazards and potential threats to human life. It has also been pointed out that several portions of the plant constitute a restricted/protected area under the Bihar Gazette Notification dated 13.10.1969 and Section 2 of the Official Secrets Act, 1923.
4. The grievance of the writ petition is that even though the representation was made by the SAIL/BSL to the District Administration, Chas, Bokaro on 15.10.2026 but the same has remain unattended. The police and the local administration have failed to discharge their duty to maintain law and order.
5. The learned Registrar General of this Court, immediately after receipt of the said communication from Mr. Indrajit Sinha learned counsel representing the writ petitioner, has brought the same to the notice of

the Hon'ble the Chief Justice by making out three proposals for consideration of the Hon'ble The Chief Justice.

6. The Hon'ble the Chief Justice has directed the learned Registrar General of this Court to constitute a Bench so that the appropriate consideration on the grievance of the content of the representation so made by the learned counsel representing the SAIL/BSL be made, thereby, the present Bench has been constituted by notifying the case for its hearing at 02:15 p.m.
7. The minutes of assignment is available on record along with approval received by the learned Registrar General of Hon'ble the Chief through WhatsApp.
8. The jurisdiction of this Court as conferred under Article 226 of the Constitution of India has been invoked.
9. Initially, the case was having the filing no.25204 of 2026 but subsequently, the present case has been instituted as W.P.(Cr.) No.639 of 2026 by impleading the following parties as respondent to the proceeding:
 1. The State of Jharkhand through Chief Secretary, having its office at Project Building, Dhurwa, P.O. Dhurwa, P.S. Jagannathpur, District Ranchi.
 2. Deputy Commissioner, Bokaro, having its office Bokaro Collectorate, P.O. & P.S. Bokaro Steel City, District Bokaro, Jharkhand.
 3. Sub Divisional Magistrate, Chas Bokaro, having its office Chas, P.O. & P.S. Chas, District Bokaro, Jharkhand.
 4. Superintendent of Police, Bokaro, having its office at Bokaro, P.O. & P.S. Bokaro Steel City, District Bokaro, Jharkhand.
 5. Officer-in-Charge, B.S. City Police Station having its office at B.S. City, P.O. & P.S. B.S. City, District Bokaro, Jharkhand.
 6. Officer-in-Charge Marafari Police Station, having its office Marafari, P.O. & P.S. Marafari, District Bokaro, Jharkhand.
 7. Officer-in-Charge Harla Police Station, having its office Harla, P.O. & P.S. Harla, District Bokaro, Jharkhand.
 8. Officer-in-Charge Sector-IV Police Station Bokaro, having its office Sector-IV, Bokaro, P.O. & P.S. Sector-IV, District Bokaro, Jharkhand.

9. Smt. Sweta Singh, MLA Bokaro, wife of Mr. Sangram Singh, resident of Sector-III, P.O. & P.S. B.S. City, Bokaro, District Bokaro, Jharkhand.

10. Visthapit Apprentice Sang (VAS) through its General Secretary, through its Central President Niwaran Diggar, son of not known to the petitioner having office at rehabilitation area Tupkadih, P.O. & P.S. Tupkadih, District Bokaro, Jharkhand.

10. The following prayer(s) have been made in the present writ petition:

“(i) For issuance of an appropriate writs/orders/directions particularly writ of mandamus commanding upon the respondent no.1 to 8 to take immediate appropriate steps/measures to ensure maintenance of law-and-order situation at the Plant gates of the petitioner company situated at Bokaro by deploying adequate number of Police Personnel at all the gates of ingress and egress gates and around the township of the petitioner company at Bokaro including obstruction free supply/movement of essential manpower and services.

And

(ii) For issuance of an appropriate writs/orders/directions particularly writ of mandamus commanding upon the respondent no.2 and 3 to forthwith act upon the Petitioner’s representation dated 15.10.2026 and to ensure immediate opening of plant gates of SAIL-BSL and further to maintain public peace and harmony at the Plant gates & premises of the petitioner company situated at Bokaro as there is imminent threat of complete blockage at the entrance of the plant premises which will cause destruction of company’s properties and pose life threat to the employees working at the plant including the local inhabitants residing around the Plant Premise of the petitioner.

AND/OR

(iii) For issuance of any other appropriate writ(s)/order(s)/direction(s) as Your Lordships may deem fit and proper in the facts and circumstances of the case.”

11. The brief facts of the case as per the pleading made in the writ petition is required to be enumerated herein which is as under:

The petitioner Bokaro Steel Plant is a unit of Steel Authority of India engaged in manufacturing of Steel and its allied products.

It has been pleaded in this writ petition that the respondent no. 9 who happens to be the local MLA alongwith her associated political activists and with the help of large mob of the members of Visthapit Apprentice Sangh (VAS) forcefully closed almost all the gates of ingress and egress of the Bokaro Steel Plant. They have halted the inflow of raw material, passage of work force, workers, maintenance and supervising staffs and have restricted them by putting a complete

halt. They have halted the continuity of Steel Plant and have created near to be a hostage situation in order to compel the management of SAIL-BSL to meet their demands. They, as per their whims, at present allowing very limited entry and exit from the main gate (Gate No. 01) and have caused serious disruption to the movement of vehicles, the essential supplies to the plant, its maintenance and operation.

Now vide letter dated 16.10.2026 the respondent no. 10 has called for complete blockage of Gate No. 1 in support of hunger strikes which is being done under the leadership of local MLA i.e. respondent no. 9. They have also threatened to close with effect from 17.10.2026 the only partial functional gate which is left open by them earlier.

The petitioner company vide its letter dated 15.10.2026 filed application before the respondent no. 2 and 3 for their intervention informing them that if the agitators will close all the plant gates it will cause serious law and order problem and pose threat to life and property of lakhs and lakhs of people as because the Bokaro Steel Plant is thermally sensitive, continuous process plant, in which gas pipelines and other critical problems are manned around the clock in all three shifts. The petitioner company has also raised apprehension that total blockage would prevent shift of crews, maintenance teams and essential supplies entering in the plant including dispatches etc. It was also brought to the knowledge of the respondent authorities that necessary actions is required at their end to maintain law and order situation.

The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) is deputed inside the plant premises for security purposes but they don't have authority to cross the plant boundary or gates. The law-and-order situation outside the plant premises is solely under the domain of district administration. The respondent nos. 9 & 10 taking advantage of such situation in planned manner trying to cripple the continuity of plant by putting complete blockade at gates. If the respondent no. 9 and 10, their supporter and agitators who are unruly mob if are allowed to cause complete blockade to the gates of the plants premise including main gate (gate no. 01) then there is inevitable threat.

It has been stated that from the early morning of 16.10.2026 all the gates of SAIL-BSL Plant are closed by the local MLA, her supporter and agitators of Visthapit Apprentice Sangh (VAS). Due to this complete blockage workers and employees approximately 3500 and more who were inside the plant are now trapped there. There is no ingress and egress due to which no shift change can be done by the Plant Management. They are hungry from the midnight of 16.10.2026. No food or water supply could be sent to them, whatever they have, those employees have already consumed. Many of them, who are sick and required regular medicine they are now in precarious condition. The situation is moving towards travesty for approximately 3500 employees and workers who have now no water, no food, no medicine.

The normal shift of SAIL-BSL employees and workers is 08:00 hrs. per day. Those who are trapped inside are handling the Plant now approximately 36.00 hrs. to 48:00 hrs. This includes maintenance of critical installation including sensitive high-pressure pipeline, molten iron and poisons substance and gases. The petitioner company is now become absolute helpless in the present situation due to complete all gates blockade and is very much suspect that this may lead to catastrophic industrial human tragedy, therefore, the instant writ petition has been filed.

12. Mr. Indrajit Sinha, learned counsel representing the writ petitioner has appeared through virtual mode assisted by Mr. Bhabhash Sinha who is present in the Court physically, has referred two judgments/orders passed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court. One is dated 05th March, 2008 passed in Civil Appeal no.1774 of 2008 on the issue of providing appointment to the displaced persons due to the establishment of the SAIL/BSL unit in the district of Bokaro, Jharkhand. The operative part of the said order has been referred by Mr. Indrajit Sinha, learned counsel representing the writ petitioner which is being reproduced as under:

“11. Be that as it may, it is now high time to put an end to the litigation. It is an admitted fact that the project was completed way back in 1966 and even after more than 40 years of the completion of the project, people whose land was acquired for the purposes of the project are still litigating for getting employment. This is not at all warranted. At the

relevant time, the intention of the government was to rehabilitate the landless people whose lands had been acquired and to provide employment to one member of the displaced family so that they could maintain the family so displaced. It was not at all the intention of the government to distribute this kind of largesse on an indefinite basis. This is nothing but an abuse of the process of Court.

12. However, in order to put an end to the controversy at hand, we direct that the 970 persons whose names have been included in category (ii) as per order dated 7.4.1998 of the High Court will be considered for appointment, other things being equal. It is submitted by counsel for the appellant that in the advertisement dated on 1.6.2007 for 300 general vacancies it has been mentioned that preference will be given to those displaced persons whose lands have been acquired. The relevant portion of the advertisement reads as under :-

"Preference will be given to local displaced persons of Bokaro as per Company's policy."

It may be made clear that consideration of the names of persons for employment does not give them a right to appointment. Other things being equal, they will be given preference in the matter of employment as and when vacancies arise.

13. We also record our displeasure that every now and then under the contempt notice the officials are required to attend courts which hampers the working of the administration. We have already expressed this view in the case of State of Gujarat Vs. Turabali Gulamhussain Hirani & Anr. reported in (2007) 10 SCR, 531 (to which one of us, Mathur, J. was a party). Hence the practice of calling the officials in contempt proceedings should be minimised and only in exceptional cases the concerned officials may be called.

14. In the result, we set aside the judgment and order dated 3/10.01.2007 passed by the Division Bench of the High Court and dismiss the contempt proceedings pending before it. We allow this appeal with the direction that the 970 persons whose names appear in category (ii) as per the direction of the High Court 7.4.1998 shall be considered and given preference for employment, other things being equal.

Appeal allowed. No order as to costs."

13. The second order which has been brought to the notice of this court of the Hon'ble Supreme Court is dated 27.09.2019 passed in the same civil appeal, i.e., Civil Appeal no.1774 of 2008 by filing interlocutory application being I.A. Nos.83745 of 2016 and 11322 of 2017. The order was passed therein by referring paragraph-11 of the order dated 05.03.2008 and the Hon'ble Supreme Court has been pleased to observe that the matter needs to be now given a quietus. The Hon'ble Supreme Court has further observed by showing disinclination to entertain any application in a civil appeal which itself is no more pending before the Court. The said order dated 27.09.2019 is being reproduced as under:

"UPON hearing the counsel the Court made the following

O R D E R

We have learned counsel for the parties.

These applications have been filed for addition of parties, impleadment and seeking compliance of order dated 05.03.2008 in Civil Appeal No.1774 of 2008.

This Court in paragraph 11 of the order dated 05.03.2008 observed as follows:

“11. Be that as it may, it is now high time to put an end to the litigation. It is an admitted fact that the project was completed way back in 1966 and even after more than 40 years of the completion of the project, people whose land was acquired for the purposes of the project are still litigating for getting employment. This is not at all warranted. At the relevant time, the intention of the government was to rehabilitate the landless people whose lands had been acquired and to provide employment to one member of the displaced family so that they could maintain the family so displaced. It was not at all the intention of the government to distribute this kind of largesse on an indefinite basis. This is nothing but an abuse of the process of Court.”

We are of the considered opinion that the matter needs to be now given a quietus. We are not inclined to entertain any application in a civil appeal which itself is no more pending before this Court.

The applications are dismissed as not maintainable.”

14. Mr. Jai Prakash, learned AAG-IA has appeared through virtual mode and waived notice on behalf of Respondent Nos. 1 to 8.
15. Mr. Ajay Nath Jha, at present holding the post of Deputy Commissioner, Bokaro and Mr. Nathu Singh Meena, at present holding the post of Superintendent of Police, Bokaro have appeared through virtual mode.
16. Mr. Jai Prakash, learned AAG-IA has submitted that he has made a request to the district administration and the police administration of the district of Bokaro and thereby, the Deputy Commissioner and S.P., Bokaro both are present to address the Court through virtual mode.
17. The Deputy Commissioner, Bokaro by showing agreement with the cause shown in the writ petition that if there will be any interruption in the smooth functioning of the furnaces, serious loss will be caused not only to the unit in question rather the loss will be a loss to the nation. As such, he has stated not only once rather thrice that all effective measures have been taken to disperse the mob assembled in and around the periphery of the unit, particularly in and around the 11 gates available in the aforesaid unit.
18. The Deputy Commissioner, Bokaro has submitted that earnest efforts were undertaken to disperse the mob, which ultimately succeeded by

persuading the protesters not to obstruct the smooth functioning of the unit. He has further submitted that such persuasion was essential to ensure uninterrupted production in the factory, which can only be achieved if the free and unhindered movement of the employees and executives is duly facilitated

19. He has stated that immediately the gate no.01 has been reopened and all the employees stuck inside the factory unit have been allowed to go to their respective residences.
20. At this juncture, learned counsel representing the writ petitioner has submitted that the other 10 gates are also to be opened.
21. The Deputy Commissioner, Bokaro has stated that he has got full information that even the other 10 gates have been reopened.
22. This Court, at this juncture, has asked the learned counsel representing the writ petitioner to have instructions with respect to the present position of the other 10 gates.
23. Thereafter, Mr. Indrajit Sinha, learned counsel has submitted, on instructions, that the said 10 gates have been reopened and the movement of the employees and the executive to come inside the factory unit and to go outside the unit to their respective residences are now being carried out but has submitted that even after making an application on 15.10.2026, the gates have forcefully been closed by the protesters for a day. He, therefore, has shown his apprehension that occurrence is likely to happen again if the district administration headed by the Deputy Commissioner or the S.P., Bokaro will not handle the situation for the purpose to maintain the law and order in and around the factory unit area.
24. The Deputy Commissioner, Bokaro has reiterated before this Court not only once but thrice that the apprehension of disruption shall not be permitted to emerge. He has assured that all effective measures will be adopted to prevent any obstruction in the ingress and egress of employees and executives to and from the unit at the commencement and conclusion of their duty shifts. Appropriate measures will be taken to dispel any fear from the minds of the employees in the discharge of

their official duties, thereby enabling them to enter the unit and thereafter return to their respective residences without apprehension.

25. This court, however, has asked the Deputy Commissioner, Bokaro to express his opinion as to whether he is facing any difficulty on account of the persons involved in the protest, in that situation, the Court may call the Secretary, Home also.
26. The Deputy Commissioner, Bokaro has once again stated before this Court that there is no necessity to call upon any higher authority, as he is fully capable of bringing the situation under control.
27. This Court, based upon the undertaking furnished by the Deputy Commissioner, Bokaro in the Court proceeding, for the present is not calling upon the Secretary, Home rather having hope and trust upon the statement as has been given by the Deputy Commissioner, Bokaro, and, is thereby deferring the matter for today.
28. In view of the assurance given by the Deputy Commissioner, Bokaro, notice is not being issued upon the Respondent Nos. 9 and 10 at the moment.
29. The matter is being posted on 28.10.2026 as a first case.
30. Let the Deputy Commissioner, Bokaro and the S.P., Bokaro file an affidavit what they have stated in the Court proceeding so that the affidavit may reach to this Court on or before the next date of hearing.

(Sujit Narayan Prasad, J.)

18th October, 2026

Birendra/Saurabh/-

Uploaded on : 18.10.2026