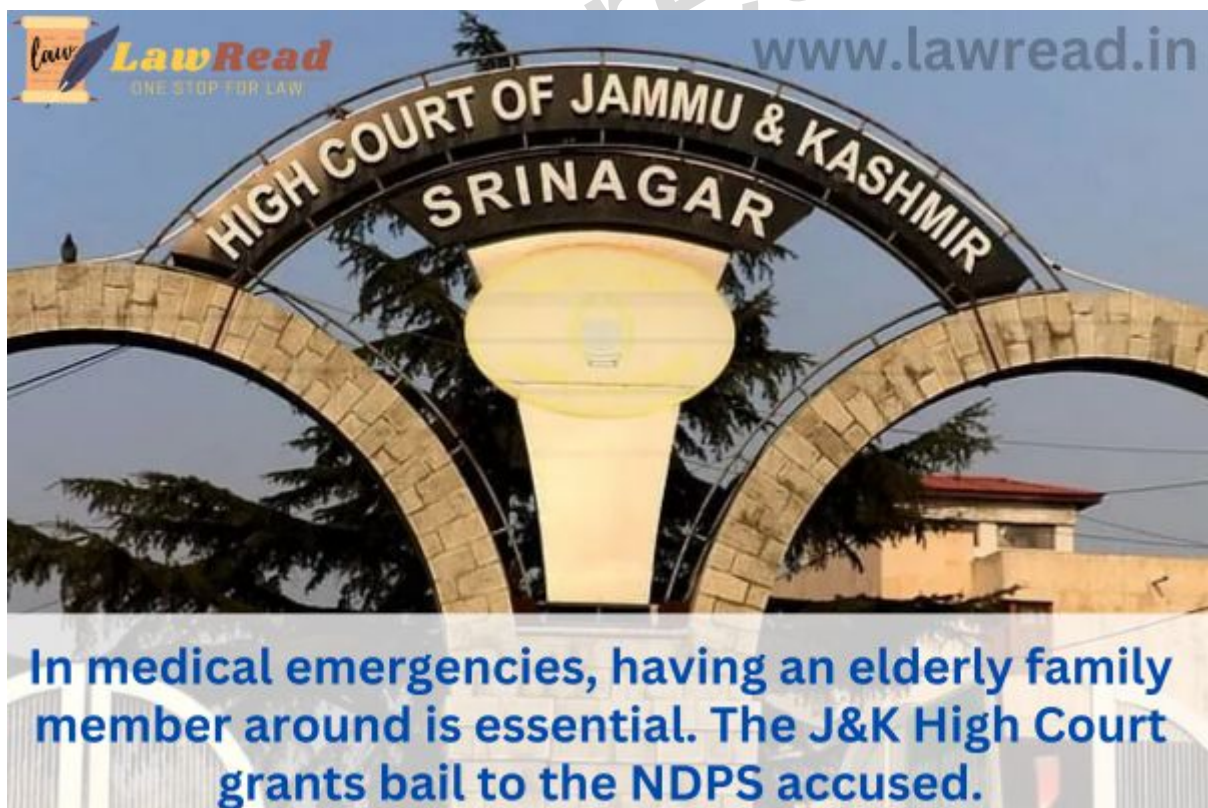


News

For restrooms on all Maharashtra highways, the Bombay High Court is requesting the State's response to the PIL.

Along with regular toilet cleaning, the petitioner also requested that sanitary pad vending machines and incinerators be installed in the restrooms.



A city-based counsel filed a public interest litigation (PIL) requesting that the State government build and maintain public restrooms on all Maharashtra highways, and the Bombay High Court on Monday granted notice in the case.

The plea contends that commuters' constitutional rights to life, health, and dignity—especially those of women, children, and senior citizens—are violated by the lack of basic sanitary

facilities.

The State of Maharashtra, represented by the Public Works Department (PWD) and the Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation (MSRDC), which oversees the state's main expressways, received notices from a bench consisting of **Chief Justice Alok Aradhe and Justice M S Karnik**.

A follow-up hearing on the case is planned on June 13.

The petitioner argues that the State's inability to establish and maintain essential sanitation infrastructure violates people's fundamental rights under Article 21 of the Constitution, pointing out government inaction despite a 2018 program to build 400 restrooms along state highways.

"Women and other commuters engage in filthy practices, endangering their health, as a result of inadequate restroom facilities, such as incinerators for sanitary waste disposal, nursing stations, and diaper changing stations. In a similar vein, parents are forced to handle necessary childcare requirements in inappropriate settings when breastfeeding stations and diaper-changing stations are not available for toddlers. According to the petition, this frequently leads to the careless disposal of soiled diapers, resulting in unsanitary situations that seriously endanger the health of toddlers and other passengers."

The request makes reference to Right to Information (RTI) responses from MSRDC and PWD, which attest to the fact that many restrooms are devoid of basic facilities including nursing rooms, diaper-changing stations, and sanitary napkin incinerators. The RTI responses do not specify the strength of the janitors' deployment or their maintenance schedules, despite the fact that they are apparently deployed.

Section 5 of the Maharashtra Highway Act, 1955, which states that the State and MSRDC are legally required to provide essential public amenities, including clean toilets, as part of highway infrastructure development, is invoked in the appeal in addition to constitutional infractions.

Concerns are also raised by the petition in light of Article 48A of the Constitution, which requires the State to safeguard the environment. It claims that unsanitary waste disposal methods cause open dumping and environmental damage.

In order to ensure regular maintenance, install sanitary pad vending machines and incinerators, build restrooms in compliance with the 2018 policy, and establish grievance redressal procedures for commuters, the petitioner has asked the State and MSRDC for instructions.

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