IN THE HIGH COURT OF KERALA AT ERNAKULAM

PRESENT

THE HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE RAJA VIJAYARAGHAVAN V

&

THE HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE K. V. JAYAKUMAR

Tuesday, the 3rd day of November 2026 / 12th Karthika, 1948

WP(C) NO. 35016 OF 2026(B)

PETITIONER:

1. **SUO MOTU in Re : Road safety in Kerala arising out of WPC 15090/2020**

RESPONDENTS:

1. **THE CHIEF SECRETARY GOVERNMENT OF KERALA, SECRETARIAT BUILDING, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, PIN - 695001**
2. **THE PRINCIPAL SECRETARY DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT, GOVERNMENT OF KERALA, SECRETARIAT BUILDING, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, PIN - 695001**
3. **THE SECRETARY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS, GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, PIN - 695001**
4. **THE SECRETARY HOME DEPARTMENT, GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM , PIN - 695001**
5. **THE SECRETARY HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE DEPARTMENT, GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, PIN - 695001**
6. **THE SECRETARY DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE, GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, PIN - 695001**
7. **THE SECRETARY GENERAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT, GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM , PIN - 695001**
8. **THE PRINCIPAL SECRETARY LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT, GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, PIN - 695001**
9. **THE ROAD SAFETY COMMISSIONER KERALA ROAD SAFETY AUTHORITY, TRANS TOWERS, VAZHUTHACAUD, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM , PIN - 695014**
10. **THE TRANSPORT COMMISSIONER MOTOR VEHICLES DEPARTMENT, TRANSPORT COMMISSIONERATE, 2ND FLOOR, TRANS TOWERS,THIRUVANANTHAPURAM , PIN - 695001**
11. **THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF POLICE AND STATE POLICE CHIEF POLICE HEADQUARTERS, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, PIN - 695010**
12. **THE CHIEF ENGINEER (ROADS, BRIDGES AND ADMINISTRATION), PWD, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, PIN - 695001**
13. **THE CHIEF ENGINEER NATIONAL HIGHWAY WING, PWD, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, PIN - 695034**
14. **THE SECRETARY MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, NEW DELHI , PIN - 110011**
15. **THE NATIONAL HIGHWAYS AUTHORITY OF INDIA REPRESENTED BY ITS CHAIRMAN, G-586, SECTOR 10, DWARKA, NEW DELHI, PIN - 110075**
16. **THE REGIONAL OFFICER/ENGINEER NHAI / MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS, PUBLIC OFFICE BUILDING, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, PIN - 695033**
17. **THE CHAIRMAN AND MANAGING DIRECTOR KERALA STATE ELECTRICITY BOARD LTD., VYDYUTHI BHAVANAM, PATTOM, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, PIN**

- 695004

18. THE MANAGING DIRECTOR KERALA WATER AUTHORITY, JALABHAVAN, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, PIN - 695033
19. THE DIRECTOR NATPAC (NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AND RESEARCH CENTRE), THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, PIN - 695011
20. THE CHAIRMAN AND MANAGING DIRECTOR KSRTC, TRANSPORT BHAVAN, FORT, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, PIN - 695023
21. KERALA STATE ELECTRONICS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LTD. (KELTRON) CORPORATE OFFICE, KELTRON HOUSE, VELLAYAMBALAM, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, PIN - 695033

BY SRI.MOHAMMED SHAH P.A, ADDITIONAL ADVOCATE GENERAL FOR R1 TO R12

SRI.P.SREEKUMAR, ADDITIONAL SOLICITOR GENERAL OF INDIA FOR R13 & R14

SRI.B.G.BIDAN, STANDING COUNSEL FOR R15 & R16

SRI.B.PRAMOD, STANDING COUNSEL FOR R17

SRI GEORGE JOHNY,STANDING COUNSEL FOR R18

SRI. RIJI RAJENDRAN, STANDING COUNSEL FOR R19

SRI.B.S.SWATHI KUMAR,STANDING COUNSEL FOR R20

SMT.M.A.ZOHRA, STANDING COUNSEL FOR R21

THE HIGH COURT OF KERALA

This Writ Petition again coming on for orders upon perusing the petition and the affidavit filed in support of WP(C) and this Court's order dated 15/10/2026, the court passed the following:

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&
K.V. JAYAKUMAR, JJ.

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3. Though directions were issued to all the respondents to respond to the various directions and recommendations contained in paragraph 54 onwards, only the 3rd respondent and the 10th respondents have come forward and filed their respective counter affidavits.

4. We have carefully gone through the affidavits filed by the 3rd respondent, the Public Works Department, and the Transport Commissioner.

5. The 3rd respondent has not adequately addressed the various issues raised by this Court in its earlier order. Instead, the affidavit contains only a general statement that the Public Works Department (PWD) owns and maintains approximately 30,000 kilometres of roads in the State of Kerala and is duty-bound to ensure the safety of the general public. A reading of the affidavit would give the impression that all activities undertaken by the PWD concerning the quality of road construction and maintenance are being rigorously monitored and effectively implemented. However, the affidavit does not address the findings and observations contained in the report of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG), nor does it offer any explanation or response to the issues highlighted therein. Further, the soft copies of the records specifically called for by this Court have not been produced, and the 3rd respondent has sought further time for their submission.

6. We remind the PWD that the very objective of initiating these proceedings is to identify the underlying causes of road accidents, reduce their occurrence across the State and ensure the safety of road users and the general public. The matter calls for a comprehensive and constructive response rather than a

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mere statement of the existing responsibilities and activities of the Department.

7. We accordingly direct the 3rd respondent to file a detailed affidavit specifically addressing the issues raised by this Court, including the observations contained in the CAG report, and setting out the measures already undertaken as well as the further structural and transformative interventions proposed to improve road safety. The affidavit shall also indicate the manner in which the PWD proposes to ensure that roads across the State are made safer and that road accidents are substantially reduced, with the ultimate objective of making the roads in the State accident-free. The records called for by this Court shall also be produced.

8. The Joint Transport Commissioner has addressed some of the issues highlighted by this Court.

9. As regards speed control, electronic enforcement and dangerous driving, it is stated that directions have been issued to all enforcement officers to strictly enforce the relevant statutory provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, relating to speed limits (Sections 112, 113, 114, 115 and 183), dangerous driving (Section 184), driving under the influence of alcohol (Section 185), racing and trials of speed (Section 189), and overloading (Section 194). The enforcement officials have also been directed to conduct joint special enforcement drives in coordination with the Police Department to ensure effective implementation of these provisions. The Transport Commissioner has further undertaken that enforcement activities will be regularly reviewed and that necessary follow-up action will be taken to ensure compliance with the directions issued by this Court, the provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, and the Rules

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made thereunder.

10. We direct the Transport Commissioner to formulate a comprehensive protocol governing enforcement activities, incorporating appropriate mechanisms for regular monitoring, coordination and follow-up action. The Transport Commissioner shall also place before this Court the relevant materials and records evidencing the initiation and implementation of proactive enforcement measures, so as to demonstrate that the directions issued by this Court are being translated into effective action on the ground.

11. As regards the implementation of Section 136A of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, it is submitted that electronic monitoring and automated enforcement systems are operational throughout the State under the Safe Kerala Project. A network of 726 electronic surveillance cameras has been installed across National Highways, State Highways and major traffic corridors through KELTRON. The network comprises 675 Artificial Intelligence Cameras (S-UDS), 25 Parking Violation Detection Systems (PVDS), 18 Red Light Violation Detection Systems (RLVDS) and 4 Speed Violation Detection Systems (SVDS). The system operates round the clock through a centralised control mechanism comprising one State Control Room (SCR) at Thiruvananthapuram and 14 district-level control rooms.

12. It is stated that the system is designed to detect various traffic violations, including failure to wear helmets and seat belts, use of mobile phones while driving, triple riding, overspeeding, red-light violations and unauthorised parking. It is further submitted that, up to 30.10.2026, a total of 1,56,82,572 electronic challans

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(e-Challans) had been issued against offending vehicles, imposing aggregate fines amounting to Rs. 1,017.46 crores. It is also stated that the AI camera-based enforcement system will be extended to all identified accident black spots on National Highways, State Highways and other high-risk roads across the State. However, no details have been furnished regarding the amounts actually collected towards the fines imposed.

13. Having considered the details furnished, we find that only four Speed Violation Detection Systems (SVDS) have been installed across the State. Considering the scale of electronic enforcement undertaken, the substantial number of violations detected and the aggregate fines imposed, we are of the view that the existing number of speed detection systems requires further augmentation. Speeding is a significant road safety concern and requires focused and sustained enforcement. We, therefore, direct the Transport Commissioner to identify locations having a high incidence of speed violations and frequent accidents and take appropriate steps to install additional Speed Violation Detection Systems at such locations. The Transport Commissioner shall also place before this Court a report indicating the locations identified, the additional systems proposed to be installed and the time frame within which the proposed expansion will be implemented.

14. It is submitted that, pursuant to the directions issued by this Court, enforcement and patrolling teams have been deployed round-the-clock along National Highway 66, extending from the northern to the southern border of Kerala, to prevent unauthorised parking, ensure lane discipline and provide assistance to road users.

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However, it is stated that, under the Safe Kerala Project, only 85 enforcement squads are presently functioning across the State. Owing to the shortage of personnel in the Department, it has not been possible to ensure continuous enforcement coverage on a 24-hour basis.

15. It is further submitted that, with a view to implementing the directions issued in the judgment, the Motor Vehicles Department has submitted a proposal to the Government seeking sanction for additional manpower to enable the enforcement squads to function round the clock under an appropriate three-shift system across all major roads in the State. It is stated that the proposal is presently under the active consideration of the Government.

16. As regards overloading, fitness, registration and permits, it is stated that the Department has been taking stringent enforcement action against vehicles found to be involved in overloading. All enforcement officials have been directed to initiate appropriate action against such vehicles in strict compliance with the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) issued by the Department. It is further stated that the driving licences of drivers who repeatedly commit the offence of overloading shall be suspended in accordance with Section 19(1) of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, read with Rule 21(8) of the Central Motor Vehicles Rules, 1989.

17. It is further stated that enforcement activities relating to overloading are duly recorded in the Parivahan portal and that electronic challans are issued by the Motor Vehicles Department against vehicles found violating the prescribed statutory provisions. The monthly enforcement data, including details of repeat offenders, is

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digitally maintained and readily accessible through the portal, thereby facilitating effective monitoring and follow-up action. It is stated that, during October 2026 alone, 391 vehicles were intercepted and booked for the offence of overloading, and a total fine of Rs.95,60,000 (Rupees Ninety-Five Lakh and Sixty Thousand only) was imposed.

18. It is further stated that the Department has taken several measures to improve the quality, reliability and transparency of vehicle inspections and the issuance of Certificates of Fitness, while minimising human intervention and reducing the possibility of human error. The Department has initiated steps to establish 28 Automated Testing Stations (ATSs) across the State. Of these, three ATSs have commenced operations at Poyapally and Kunnathur in Kollam District and Nooranadu in Alappuzha District. The remaining stations are expected to become operational in due course. It is further stated that the inspection parameters and test results generated at each Automated Testing Station are integrated with the national VAHAN portal, thereby ensuring transparency and uniformity in the inspection process. Certificates of Fitness shall be issued only after verifying that the vehicles satisfy the applicable requirements under the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, and the Rules made thereunder.

19. It is stated that, with the objective of phasing out old, dilapidated and unfit vehicles and promoting environmentally sustainable vehicle recycling practices, the Government has introduced the Voluntary Vehicle Fleet Modernization Programme (V-VMP). As part of this initiative, Registered Vehicle Scrapping Facilities (RVSFs) are being established across Kerala to facilitate the scientific and systematic dismantling of old vehicles. The principal objectives of the programme are to phase out old and unfit

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vehicles, ensure scientific, systematic and environmentally sustainable disposal of vehicles, and promote the reuse and recycling of vehicle components and materials. It is further stated that the Government has accorded sanction for the establishment of three Registered Vehicle Scrapping Facilities in Kerala, covering the southern, central and northern regions of the State. In the southern region, the facility is being established at Cherthala in Alappuzha District by Steel Industrials Kerala Limited (SILK). In the northern region, the facility is being established at Azhikkal in Kannur District, also by SILK. In the central region, the facility is being established at Edappal in Malappuram District as a joint venture involving KSRTC and M/s. SIMCO RVSF Pvt. Ltd. It is stated that, within a short period of commencing operations, 782 vehicles have been dismantled through these facilities and Certificates of Deposit have been issued in respect of the vehicles scrapped. The entire process is integrated with the national VAHAN portal, thereby ensuring proper digital recording, traceability and monitoring of vehicle scrapping activities.

20. With regard to private bus timings, structural reforms and public transport safety, it is submitted that the Department has initiated steps to rationalise stage carriage operations across the State through comprehensive reforms in the existing system of route and timing management. With a view to ensuring scientific and systematic scheduling of stage carriage services, the Department proposes to introduce an integrated digital platform under the name "KERALA BUSZ". The proposed platform is envisaged as a comprehensive digital system incorporating vehicle location tracking, permit management, route management, and regulation of timings and

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speeds of stage carriages. It will analyse various operational parameters, including traffic intensity along different routes, vehicle speeds, permissible speed limits, existing scheduled timings, GPS-based vehicle movement data, travel time and the actual requirement and availability of transport services. By analysing these time and movement parameters, the platform is expected to facilitate the scientific determination and rationalisation of bus routes, schedules and timings, thereby minimising overlapping operations and ensuring more efficient deployment of stage carriage services. It is further stated that the platform will digitally integrate all Regional Transport Offices and the State Transport Authority, thereby establishing a centralised and unified repository of reliable information for the administration, regulation and effective management of public transport operations throughout the State. According to the 10th respondent, the initiative is expected to bring greater transparency, improve operational efficiency and facilitate informed and scientifically based decision-making in the regulation of stage carriage services.

21. It is further stated that, in terms of Rule 151A of the Kerala Motor Vehicles Rules, 1989, all public service vehicles are required to be equipped with Vehicle Location Tracking Devices (GPS) and one or more emergency buttons. The installation of Vehicle Location Tracking Devices is mandatory for the grant of a Certificate of Fitness to existing public transport vehicles and at the time of registration of new public transport vehicles, in accordance with the applicable statutory provisions. For the effective implementation and monitoring of this statutory requirement, the Motor Vehicles Department has developed a centralised digital platform, namely,

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"SurakshaMitr", with the technical assistance of the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC), Thiruvananthapuram. It is stated that 2,35,236 public transport vehicles have been registered on the SurakshaMitr portal. Real-time vehicle movement data, including the speed and geographical location of vehicles, are being transmitted to the platform through the installed tracking devices. The system facilitates continuous monitoring of vehicle movements and provides a technological framework for strengthening passenger safety and ensuring more effective oversight of public transport operations.

22 It is stated that, in terms of the directions issued by this Court, proceedings have been initiated for the constitution of an Expert Committee comprising the Transport Commissioner as its Chairperson, the Kerala Road Safety Commissioner, the Director of NATPAC, a representative of KSRTC, a representative of the Kochi Metropolitan Transport Authority and a nominee of the Indian Institute of Management Kozhikode. The Expert Committee is entrusted with the task of examining the issues and matters specifically referred to it in the judgment and submitting its report to the Government.

23. It is further submitted that, in compliance with the directions issued by this Court in paragraph 67(i) of the judgment, a meeting of stakeholders, including representatives of bus operators' associations, Kochi Metro and other concerned parties, is proposed to be convened on 13.11.2026 at Ernakulam. The meeting is intended to deliberate upon the various issues referred to by this Court in the judgment and arrive at appropriate decisions. Based on the deliberations and decisions

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taken at the meeting, the Department shall initiate further necessary action in the matter.

24. It is submitted that, pursuant to the amendments introduced to the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, through the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Act, 2026, certain provisions under Chapter XIII (Offences, Penalties and Procedure) of the Motor Vehicles Act have been amended, introducing a graded enforcement mechanism for dealing with violations of the statutory provisions. Accordingly, permit holders found violating Rule 153 of the Kerala Motor Vehicles Rules, 1989, shall be proceeded against and penalised in accordance with the relevant provisions of the amended Motor Vehicles Act. It is further submitted that repeated violations by permit holders will be viewed seriously and appropriate action, including suspension of permits, shall be initiated in accordance with the applicable statutory provisions and after following the due process of law. The Department has also undertaken to examine the provisions of the Kerala Motor Vehicles Rules, 1989, in the light of the amendments introduced through the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Act, 2026, and the directions issued by this Court, and to take appropriate steps wherever necessary.

25. As regards driver discipline, vehicle conspicuity and emergency response, it is submitted that the Department proposes to develop a Driver Profile Mechanism through a digital platform by integrating the databases of the e-Challan, iRAD, VAHAN and SARATHI portals. The proposed system is intended to create a comprehensive digital record of the driving history and traffic violations of individual drivers. The Driver Profile portal will consolidate relevant information, including driving history,

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accident records and antecedents, traffic violations, details of suspension or cancellation of driving licences, previous enforcement actions and findings relating to reckless or dangerous driving. This integrated mechanism is expected to enable the Department to identify habitual traffic violators and drivers with a history of unsafe driving practices, thereby facilitating appropriate regulatory action against repeat offenders.

26. With regard to the safety and accountability of drivers of public and heavy vehicles, it is submitted that the Department will consider and take appropriate steps to implement the direction issued by this Court regarding the creation and maintenance of a State-wide Public and Heavy Vehicle Drivers' Registry. The proposed Registry will contain the identity particulars and driving licence details of every person employed or engaged as a driver of private buses, school buses, stage carriages, contract carriages and other public transport vehicles. It is further stated that consultations will be initiated with the relevant stakeholders to formulate an appropriate mechanism for establishing and maintaining the Registry. Access to the Registry shall be restricted exclusively to duly authorised officers of the Motor Vehicles Department and the Police Department.

27. It is further submitted that the Government has decided to establish a Road Safety Mission, which is scheduled to commence on 15.11.2026, with the objective of strengthening road safety initiatives across the State. The proposed Mission will adopt a comprehensive and coordinated approach, focusing on the three key pillars of road safety, namely, Education, Enforcement and Engineering. The

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initiative is intended to enhance road safety awareness, strengthen the enforcement of traffic laws, promote road safety improvement measures with the participation of all stakeholders, and foster a sustainable culture of road safety throughout the State.

28. With regard to the development of the Integrated Road Safety Monitoring Platform, it is submitted that all digital initiatives of the Motor Vehicles Department relating to road safety are proposed to be integrated into a single Command and Control Centre at the Transport Commissionerate. These initiatives include AI camera-based enforcement, the vehicle location tracking system (SurakshaMitr), Vidya Vahan for school transportation, the Virtual Check Post and the monitoring of manual enforcement activities. The proposed integration is intended to facilitate centralised monitoring, strengthen coordination among enforcement agencies and ensure the effective utilisation of available data for road safety management.

29. We remind the Transport Commissioner that the Integrated Road Safety Monitoring Platform conceptualised by this Court is expected to be comprehensive and must incorporate, among other things, the following modules:

(a) Citizens' Hazard Reporting Module;

(b) Authority Defect Register and Reporting Module;

(c) Utility Coordination Portal;

(d) Black Spot Tracker;

(e) Safety Audit Module;

(f) Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) and Electronic Enforcement Module;

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(g) Road Maintenance Management System (RMMS) and GIS Integration Module;

(h) Engineer Accountability Module;

(i) Compliance Dashboard; and

(j) Analytical and Reporting Module, with real-time analytics and role-based dashboards.

30. We have also tentatively identified the departments and officers who are required to collaborate in the development and operationalisation of the Platform. The Transport Commissioner shall ensure that the proposed integration is not confined to the consolidation of existing digital initiatives, but evolves into a comprehensive, GIS-enabled platform incorporating the aforesaid modules and facilitating coordinated action, accountability and effective monitoring of road safety measures across the State.

31. It is further submitted that, pursuant to the interim orders passed by this Court in the present writ petition, a meeting of all Regional Transport Officers (RTOs) and Sub-Regional Transport Officers (Sub-RTOs) was convened on 02.11.2026 to deliberate upon various issues concerning stage carriage operators. Instructions were issued to the Regional Transport Authorities (RTAs) to take necessary steps to revise and rationalise bus timings on or before 30.11.2026. Insofar as Ernakulam District is concerned, the Deputy Transport Commissioner has been requested to convene a meeting of stakeholders on 13.11.2026 to discuss and finalise the revision of travel timings and schedules of private stage carriages.

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32. We pointed out to the learned Additional Advocate General that the development of a State-wide, GIS-enabled Integrated Road Safety Monitoring Platform is of paramount importance for achieving effective and coordinated road safety management. We, therefore, requested the learned Additional Advocate General to take the lead in coordinating the efforts of the various departments and agencies and to ensure that the recommendations made by this Court from paragraph 81 onwards, particularly those concerning the development and implementation of the proposed platform, are acted upon.

33. The learned Standing Counsel appearing for the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), the learned Standing Counsel appearing for NATPAC, and the learned counsel appearing for the other respondents submitted that they require further time to examine the directions issued by this Court and place on record the measures and proposals that can be undertaken for their effective implementation.

34. Having regard to the submissions made, we are of the view that the respondents can be granted a further period of three weeks to examine the issues and place before this Court concrete proposals and appropriate solutions for implementing the directions issued earlier.

35. The learned Additional Advocate General further submitted that, for the effective development and implementation of the proposed Integrated Road Safety Monitoring Platform, an officer from the Police Department may also be included in the Steering Committee. We find merit in the suggestion and accordingly direct the Director General of Police to nominate a competent officer for this purpose and include

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such officer as a member of the Steering Committee.

36. We direct the respondents to come forward with concrete proposals and solutions addressing all the aspects highlighted by this Court in the order dated 24.09.2026. The respondents shall also place before this Court an updated statement indicating the stage of implementation and the present status of the various initiatives already undertaken, as well as those proposed to be implemented. The statement shall clearly set out the measures taken, the progress achieved and the steps yet to be completed in respect of each initiative.

Post after 30.11.2026.

sd/-
RAJA VIJAYARAGHAVAN V,
JUDGE

sd/-
K.V. JAYAKUMAR,
JUDGE

APM & PS