

Suppl-1, Sl. Nos. 1-2

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF MANIPUR
AT IMPHAL**

PIL No. 2 of 2026

1. Shri. Sarangthem Premjit Meitei, aged about 42 years, S/O Shri S. Maipak Meitei, a resident of Thambalkhong Kongba Chanam Leikai, PO & PS Porompat, Imphal East, 795005 **& 54 Others.**

.....Petitioners

-Versus-

1. The State Manipur represented by the Commissioner/Secretary (Arts & Culture), Government of Manipur, Secretariat Building, P.O. & P.S. Imphal, Imphal West District, Manipur – 795001.
2. The Deputy Commissioner, Imphal West District, Government of Manipur, P.O. & P.S. Lamphel, Imphal West District, Manipur – 795004.
3. The President, Hiyangthang Lairembi Development Seva Committee, Hiyangthang, PO Hiyangthang, PS Wangoi, Imphal West, Manipur – 795009.

..... Respondents

***With
MC(PIL) No. 4 of 2026***

BEFORE
**HON'BLE THE CHIEF JUSTICE MR. M. SUNDAR
HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE AHANTHEM BIMOL SINGH**

ORDER
(Order of the court was made by M. Sundar, CJ)

18.02.2026

[1] After some arguments, Mr. Anjan Prasad Sahu, learned counsel on record for the PIL petitioners sought leave of this Court to withdraw the captioned PIL and the captioned MC thereat but made a prayer

to preserve all the rights and contentions of the writ petitioners to approach the civil court in this regard. A scanned reproduction of the endorsement made by learned counsel on record for PIL petitioners in the case file is as follows :

Noting by office or Advocate	Serial No.	Date	Office notes, reports, orders or proceedings with Signature
1.	2.	3.	4.
<i>As we wish to withdraw the instant PIL to approach the civil court</i> <i>18/02/26</i> <i>[Signature]</i>	<i>2</i> <i>2026.</i>	<i>16</i> <i>02</i> <i>2026.</i>	<i>Presented before the</i> <i>Joint Registrar (Judl. & Bench)</i> <i>on 17/2/26 at 11:30 a.m.</i> <i>[Signature]</i> <i>Registrar (Judl.)</i> <i>High Court of Manipur</i> <i>Imphal (Manipur)</i>

[2] Though it is a case of withdrawal as the matter may now go to the civil court, this Court deems it appropriate to give the factual matrix in a nutshell.

[3] A temple for Irai Leima deity being 'Hiyangthang Lairembi temple' situate in Hiayangthang, Imphal West, Manipur (hereinafter 'said temple' for convenience) is the nucleus of the matter; that according to the petitioners, the Sarangthem Clan has an exclusive customary right to perform annual ritual on the first Tuesday of Lamta month of the Meitei Calendar; that this ritual was not performed last English Calendar/Gregorian Calendar (2025) though according to writ petitioners it was conducted in the

earlier years; that writ petitioners wrote a letter dated 20.01.2026 (through a Society) to R3 (the President, Hiyangthang Lairembi Development Seva Committee, Hiyangthang, PO Hiyangthang, PS Wangoi, Imphal West, Manipur – 795009) seeking permission to perform what according to PIL petitioners is customary right, this English Calendar year (2026); that it is to be noted that the first Tuesday of the Lamta month of the Meitei Calendar falls on 24.02.2026; that R3 responded to this permission seeking letter from a Society by name Sarangthem Sagei Apunba Chaokhat Thousin Tengbang Lup (to be noted, PIL petitioners submit that they are members of this Society) vide a communication dated 31.01.2026 bearing Reference No. HLDS/Admn/2026 stating that said temple will remain open on 10th March, 2026 and the prayer and ritual observances can be done on that day, that claiming exclusive customary right, captioned PIL has been filed.

[4] This Court makes it clear that it has not expressed any view or opinion one way or the other on the claims of the PIL petitioners as the matter will now stand relegated to the jurisdictional civil court if the petitioners and/or any other person/persons claiming afore-referred exclusive customary right approach the jurisdictional civil court by way of a suitable civil court. If this scenario unfurls, the suit shall be examined on its own merits and in accordance with law as expeditiously as the official business of the jurisdictional civil court permits. In this regard, we preserve all the rights and contentions of the PIL petitioners as well as any other person/persons who may claim similar right/rights.

[5] To be noted, Ms. N. Jyotsana, learned State Counsel was waiting in the court to accept notice for R1 and R2 but the need did not arise as this Court is not issuing notice as PIL petitioners have sought to withdraw the captioned PIL and MC thereat.

[6] Captioned PIL and captioned MC thereat disposed as withdrawn/closed albeit with preservation of rights/contentions and with observations as above.

[7] There shall be no order as to costs.

JUDGE

CHIEF JUSTICE

FR/NFR

Sushil

Upload forthwith