

**Calcutta High Court
In the Circuit Bench at Jalpaiguri
Appellate Jurisdiction**

WPA 583 of 2020

Sanjib Chakraborty
-versus
Union of India & Ors.

Mr. Hillol Saha Poddar
...For the petitioner

Mr. Samir Paul
...For Northeast Frontier Railway

The petitioner complains that he was travelling from New Jalpaiguri to New Cooch Behar by Kanchanjunga Express Train, bearing no.13173 after purchasing a valid ticket with reservation. The petitioner's grievance is that in many of the railway stations he crossed in course of his journey did not have the station names displayed in Bengali language. They were in English and in Hindi. The communications in the train by the railway staff were also in Hindi. The petitioner therefor found difficulty in reading the station names and to communicate with the railway staff.

The petitioner appears to have signed in English in the writ petition and, as such, he cannot claim to be not conversant with English. There is no statement in the writ petition that the petitioner does not know

English. The petitioner therefor could not have been in any inconvenience due to non-display of the station names in Bengali. So far as the difficulty in conversing in Hindi is concerned, the same cannot be helped as it will require a railway staff to know all languages spoken in India which is an absurd proposition.

However, there is a broader element involved in the writ petition. In the State of West Bengal, Bengali is the official language. It is a scheduled language as per the Constitution of India. There is a notification dated 24th May, 1978 said to have been issued by the Joint Director, Official Language, Railway Board, addressed to the General Managers of All Indian Railways, which has been placed by the petitioner wherein it is mentioned that in non-Hindi speaking areas display shall be in the regional language, Hindi and English. This is applicable for all States except the State of Tamil Nadu.

Advocate appearing on behalf of the respondent nos.3 to 7 submits that the petition is not maintainable. He also disputes the fact that the name of the railway stations are not displayed in Bengali in the area complained of by the petitioner.

Be that as it may, since there is an official notification, the General Manager, Northeast Frontier Railway, being the respondent no.3, should consider

the petitioner's representation treating the writ petition as his representation and dispose of the same within four months from the date of communication of a server copy of this order and a copy of the writ petition. Since the matter is of some public interest, the respondent no.3 should also ensure that the station names are displayed in Bengali, if not already so done, in the area complained of by the writ petitioner.

The writ petition is disposed of accordingly.

There shall be no order as to costs.

Urgent photostat certified copy of this order, if applied for, be supplied to the parties as early as possible.

(Arindam Mukherjee, J.)