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* **IN THE HIGH COURT OF DELHI AT NEW DELHI**

% *Date of Decision: 06.07.2026*

+ **LPA 466/2026 & CM APPL. 40895/2026**

VINIT CHAWLA

.....Appellant

Through: Mr. Shanker Raju and Mr. Nilansh
Gaur, Advocates.

versus

RESERVE BANK OF INDIA & ANR.

.....Respondents

Through: Mr. Ramesh Babu M. R. and Ms.
Nisha Sharma, Advocates.

CORAM:

HON'BLE THE CHIEF JUSTICE

HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE TEJAS KARIA

TEJAS KARIA, J. (Oral)

1. The present Letters Patent Appeal has been preferred against the judgment and order dated 18.05.2026 ("**Impugned Judgment**") passed by the learned Single Judge in W.P.(C) 5604/2020 ("**Writ Petition**"), whereby the learned Single Judge dismissed the Writ Petition.

2. Brief facts pertaining to the present Appeal are hereunder:

2.1. The Appellant joined the services of the Reserve Bank of India ("**RBI**") in December, 2013 as an Assistant, upon qualifying the requisite examinations, and was posted at the Regional Office, New Delhi.

2.2. A Chargesheet dated 12.09.2018 ("**Chargesheet**") was issued to the Appellant under Regulation 47(1) of the RBI (Staff)



Regulations, 1948 (“**RBI Regulations**”), alleging violation of Regulation 32 thereof.

- 2.3. An Inquiry Officer was appointed on 08.10.2018. The Appellant was directed to appear before the Inquiry Officer on various dates and was further required to furnish the particulars of his defence representative, witnesses, and documents. Thereafter, the Inquiry Officer submitted an *ex parte* report dated 14.12.2018 (“**Inquiry Report**”), holding that the Appellant had violated Regulation 32 of the RBI Regulations.
- 2.4. Subsequently, a Show Cause Notice dated 13.02.2019 was issued to the Appellant, proposing the penalty of dismissal from service under Regulation 47(1)(g) of the RBI Regulations.
- 2.5. *Vide* order dated 28.02.2019 (“**Dismissal Order**”), the Disciplinary Authority imposed the penalty of dismissal from service upon the Appellant. The Disciplinary Authority recorded that the Appellant had failed to respond to any notice or communication issued during the course of the disciplinary proceedings.
- 2.6. The Appellant preferred a Departmental Appeal on 19.08.2019, which was dismissed on 29.01.2020 (“**Departmental Appeal Order**”). Thereafter, the Appellant sought reconsideration of the matter. The RBI treated the request as one falling under Regulation 50(h) of the RBI Regulations and declined reconsideration on the ground that no new circumstance had been disclosed.
- 2.7. The Appellant made a further request for reconsideration of the Departmental Appeal Order on 20.02.2020. The Appellate



Authority, *vide* order dated 23.06.2020 (“**Review Order**”), reconsidered the review appeal and rejected the same.

2.8. Thereafter, the Appellant preferred the Writ Petition challenging the Dismissal Order, the Departmental Appeal Order, and the Review Order.

2.9. The learned Single Judge, *vide* the Impugned Judgment, dismissed the Writ Petition and declined to remit the matter for fresh consideration of penalty, holding that the Disciplinary and Appellate Authorities had acted properly and that a remand would serve no purpose. Aggrieved thereby, the Appellant has preferred the present Appeal.

3. Mr. Shanker Raju, learned Counsel for the Appellant submitted that:

3.1. The penalty of dismissal imposed upon the Appellant was illegal, arbitrary, and grossly disproportionate. The allegation pertaining to late attendance had already been regularised by treating the same as forfeited leave, and that imposition of the penalty of dismissal on the very same basis amounts to double jeopardy, in contravention of Paragraph No. 5.3.2.5 of the RBI General Administration Manual (“**RBI Manual**”).

3.2. The Disciplinary Authority, while imposing the penalty, took into consideration alleged instances of misconduct, which neither formed part of the Chargesheet nor stood proved in the Inquiry Report. This is contrary to Clause III of Paragraph No. 5.3.2.5 of the RBI Manual. Despite the said issue having been specifically raised before the Respondents, it was not considered, thereby resulting in violation of the principles of natural justice.



- 3.3. No finding was recorded by the Inquiry Officer with respect to the charge of incomplete work dated 17.07.2018. Such omission is contrary to Paragraph No. 5.3.4.14 of the RBI Manual, which mandates that findings be recorded in respect of each charge, and consequently renders the said charge unsustainable.
- 3.4. The learned Single Judge erred in framing the issues without appreciating that the Appellant's inability to participate in the inquiry proceedings was occasioned by extreme mitigating circumstances, namely, false litigations instituted by his estranged wife. The Appellant was relieved of the said proceedings only in August, 2019, when the same were quashed by this Court, by which time the Dismissal Order had already been passed.
- 3.5. None of the charges levelled against the Appellant pertained to corruption, dishonesty, or moral turpitude, and that the allegations were confined to minor administrative lapses. Reliance upon the Appellant's past record, which did not form part of the Chargesheet, for justifying the extreme penalty of dismissal is stated to be impermissible in law.
- 3.6. The Appellate Authority as well as the Review Authority failed to independently examine the issue of proportionality and mechanically concurred with the findings of the Disciplinary Authority. The review appeal was rejected *vide* the Review Order by a non-speaking order, despite the Appellant having placed fresh material on record, including medical records, the divorce decree, and the order quashing the criminal proceedings.



- 3.7. In view of the Appellant's clean service record from 2013 to 2017, the nature of the allegations, and the absence of any charge involving moral turpitude, the penalty of dismissal after six years of satisfactory service was wholly disproportionate.
4. Mr. Ramesh Babu M. R., learned Counsel for the Respondents submitted that:
- 4.1. The present Appeal is devoid of merit and is liable to be dismissed, inasmuch as the disciplinary proceedings were conducted strictly in accordance with the RBI Regulations.
- 4.2. The Appellant was duly served with the Chargesheet, informed of the appointment of the Inquiry Officer, and repeatedly afforded opportunities to participate in the inquiry proceedings. Despite receipt of all notices and notwithstanding the fact that he had marked his attendance in office on several dates fixed for inquiry, the Appellant deliberately abstained from participating in the proceedings. The Inquiry Officer, thereafter, proceeded *ex parte* vide the Inquiry Report only after granting repeated adjournments and adequate opportunities to the Appellant.
- 4.3. In the present case, having regard to the Appellant's persistent indiscipline, repeated non-compliance with official directions, complete failure to participate in the disciplinary proceedings, and sustained disregard for institutional discipline, the penalty of dismissal cannot be characterised as irrational or disproportionate.
- 4.4. The Appellant's plea of matrimonial discord and mental distress was raised only at the appellate stage. Such personal difficulties, however genuine, cannot justify prolonged neglect of official



duties, refusal to comply with lawful instructions, or non-participation in disciplinary proceedings.

5. We have heard the learned Counsel of Parties and perused the material available on record.

6. The charges against the Appellant were not confined to an isolated lapse, but comprised repeated failure to comply with official instructions, acts of insubordination, absence from assigned duties, and non-availability for official work etc. Therefore, in our considered view, such allegations cannot be regarded as mere administrative lapses, since persistent indiscipline and insubordination have a direct bearing on the orderly functioning of an organisation.

7. The record demonstrates that the Appellant was duly served with the Chargesheet and was afforded repeated opportunities to participate in the inquiry proceedings. Despite having marked his attendance in office on the relevant dates, the Appellant chose not to appear before the Inquiry Officer, who proceeded *ex parte* only after granting adequate adjournments.

8. The plea of denial of natural justice is, therefore, without merit. Having voluntarily abstained from the inquiry proceedings, the Appellant cannot now be permitted to assail the adequacy of the findings recorded by the Inquiry Officer in the Inquiry Report.

9. The charges were not restricted to isolated instances of late attendance, but disclosed a pattern of indiscipline and non-compliance, which was required to be assessed cumulatively. Regularisation of leave in respect of late attendance does not efface the disciplinary consequences flowing from the Appellant's overall conduct.



10. The contention pertaining to matrimonial litigation and the consequent mental distress, having been raised for the first time at the appellate stage, does not satisfactorily explain the Appellant's complete failure to respond to any communication issued during the course of the disciplinary proceedings. Personal difficulties, however genuine, cannot justify prolonged non-participation in disciplinary proceedings or continued non-compliance with lawful directions.

11. The Departmental Appeal Order and the Review Order reflect due consideration of the submissions advanced by the Appellant as well as the fresh material placed on record, including the medical records and the divorce decree. The said material was found insufficient to warrant interference with the penalty imposed.

12. Accordingly, the Appellant has failed to make out any ground warranting interference with the Impugned Judgment. The Appeal is, therefore, dismissed. The pending Application also stands disposed of. There shall be no order as to costs.

TEJAS KARIA, J

DEVENDRA KUMAR UPADHYAYA, CJ

JULY 6, 2026

N/ap