

**CRM-48129-2024 in/and
CRM-A-1620-2024 (O&M)**

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**IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA
AT CHANDIGARH**

**CRM-48129-2024 in/and
CRM-A-1620-2024 (O&M)
Date of Decision: 17.01.2025**

STATE THROUGH SR. DIVISIONAL SECURITY COMMISSIONER,
RAILWAY PROTECTION FORCE, NORTHERN RAILWAY, AMBALA
CANTT.

.. Applicant

Vs.

MADAN MOHAN RANA

..Respondent

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE SUMEET GOEL

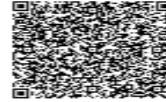
Present: Mr. C.S. Bakhshi, Senior Panel Counsel for UOI-applicant.

...

SUMEET GOEL, J. (Oral)

1. The present application has been filed on behalf of the applicant seeking condonation of delay of 228 days in filing the application seeking leave to appeal. Leave to appeal has been sought for by the applicant-State against the judgment dated 24.01.2024 passed by the ld. Special Railways Magistrate, Haryana at Ambala Cantt., whereby respondent was acquitted from the charges framed against him under Sections 147, 153, 174-C of Railways Act.

2. Learned counsel appearing for the applicant, while seeking grant of prayer for condonation of delay of 228 days, has argued that the delay has occurred as the applicant counsel had received the documents from the concerned office at a belated stage. Learned counsel for the applicant has further argued that the circumstances of the case indicate that the delay in filing the application seeking leave to appeal is neither intentional nor deliberate hence, the delay deserves to be condoned.



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the paper-book.

4. It would be apposite to refer herein to a judgment of this Court passed in ***CRR(F)-1844-2023*** titled as ***Deepak vs. Noori and another*** decided on 29.02.2024; relevant whereof reads as under:-

"8. As a sequel to above-said discussion, the following principles of law emerge:

A liberal approach, undoubtedly, ought to be accorded to a plea for condonation of delay made under Section 5 of The Limitation Act, 1969 so as to further the cause of substantial justice. The concept of substantial justice essentially includes in itself the desirability of adjudication of a claim of the litigant on merits thereof rather than rejection of the same, at the threshold, on account of being barred by limitation. However, adoption of such liberal approach cannot be stretched to mean that a prayer (for condonation of delay) ought to be granted sans reasonable explanation therefor. An applicant (seeking condonation of delay) has to bring forward cogent, credible and lucid reason(s) to substantiate such a plea. In case such reason(s) is not scrutable, a Court would well be within its discretion to decline such plea (for condonation of delay). In other words, inexplicable delay ought not to be condoned.

II.A Court ought to grant an application seeking condonation of delay when no negligence, inaction or want of bona fide is imputable to such applicant and/or such delay has occurred on account of circumstances beyond reasonable control of such applicant.

III. It is not the length of delay (sought to be condoned) but explanation thereof which is relevant for consideration by a Court.

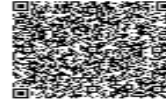
IV. Law of limitation does not require an applicant (seeking condonation of delay) to furnish an exhaustive explanation on 'day to-day basis' for such delay. A Court while dealing with a plea for condonation of delay need not undertake such a pedantic approach.

V. In appropriate cases, a Court may consider imposing costs while granting an application for condonation of delay. However, the quantification of costs so imposed, must reflect the same being commensurate to the lis in issue as also attending circumstances therein.

VI. The factum; of non-applicant(s) or even strangers having altered their position(s) relying upon the applicant not having filed an appeal/revision etc. within stipulated time and resultant effects thereof; will indubitably be a pertinent factor for consideration of a plea for condonation of delay.

VII. A plea for condonation of delay by the State as also its instrumentalities has to be accorded a more liberal approach since the machinery involved in their working is impersonal in nature & hidden factors working therein cannot be given a complete amiss.

VIII. The discretion of a Court, while considering a plea for condonation of delay, will be exercised in view of peculiar facts/circumstances of an individual case. It is neither prudent nor feasible to fix any exhaustive guidelines for exercising such judicial discretion. On the contrary, it would be perilous to lay down such general criteria for



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governing such discretion. Needless to emphasize that exercise of such judicial discretion/power ought to be within the four corners of well settled principles of justice, good conscience and fair play."

5. More recently, the Hon'ble Supreme Court in case titled as ***'State of Madhya Pradesh Vs. Ramkumar Choudhary', Neutral Citation: 2024 INSC 932***, has observed as under:

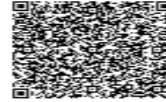
"The legal position is that where a case has been presented in the Court beyond limitation, the petitioner has to explain the Court as to what was the "sufficient cause" which means an adequate and enough reason which prevented him to approach the Court within limitation. In Majji Sannemma v. Reddy Sridevi, it was held by this Court that even though limitation may harshly affect the rights of a party, it has to be applied with all its rigour when prescribed by statute. A reference was also made to the decision of this Court in Ajay Dabra v. Pyare Ram wherein, it was held as follows:

"13. This Court in the case of Basawaraj v. Special Land Acquisition Officer ((2013) 14 SCC 81] while rejecting an application for condonation of delay for lack of sufficient cause has concluded in Paragraph 15 as follows:

"15. The law on the issue can be summarised to the effect that where a case has been presented in the court beyond limitation, the applicant has to explain the court as to what was the "sufficient cause" which means an adequate and enough reason which prevented him to approach the court within limitation. In case a party is found to be negligent, or for want of bona fide on his part in the facts and circumstances of the case, or found to have not acted diligently or remained inactive, there cannot be a justified ground to condone the delay. No court could be justified in condoning such an inordinate delay by imposing any condition whatsoever. The application is to be decided only within the parameters laid down by this Court in regard to the condonation of delay. In case there was no sufficient cause to prevent a litigant to approach the court on time condoning the delay without any justification, putting any condition whatsoever, amounts to passing an order in violation of the statutory provisions and it tantamounts to showing utter disregard to the legislature.

14. Therefore, we are of the considered opinion that the High Court did not commit any mistake in dismissing the delay condonation application of the present appellant."

Thus, it is crystal clear that the discretion to condone the delay has to be exercised judiciously based on facts and circumstances of each case and that, the expression 'sufficient cause' cannot be liberally interpreted, if negligence, inaction or lack of bona fides is attributed to the party."



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6. Further, the Hon'ble Supreme Court in case titled as ***Pathapati Subba Reddy (Died) by L.Rs & Ors. vs. The Special Deputy Collector (LA), Neutral Citation: 2024 INSC 286***, has observed as under:

"26. On a harmonious consideration of the provisions of the law, as aforesaid, and the law laid down by this Court, it is evident that:

xxx xxx xxx xxx xxx xxx

vii) Merits of the case are not required to be considered in condoning the delay; and

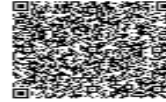
(viii) Delay condonation application has to be decided on the parameters laid down for condoning the delay and condoning the delay for the reason that the conditions have been imposed, tantamounts to disregarding the statutory provision."

7. Condonation of delay of 389 days in filing the application seeking leave to appeal is sought for on the following relevant averments:

"2. That the appellant counsel had received the file from the concerned office at a belated stage which subsequently resulted in delay in filing the present appeal.

3. That this delay in the filing of the appeal has occurred due to bona fide reasons and not due to any malafide intent on the part of the appellant. The appellant has not made any gains from this delay and has not caused any loss to any person."

7.1 The sole ground asserted in the arguments advanced on behalf of the applicant, as well as stated in the application for condonation of delay, is that the delay occurred as the applicant counsel had received the documents at a belated stage from the concerned office to file the application seeking leave to appeal. A mere bald assertion of receiving the documents late by the applicant counsel from the concerned office cannot constitute a sufficient ground for the condonation of delay. Such a plea, unsupported by cogent evidence or substantial justification, fails to meet the threshold of "sufficient cause" as envisaged under the law. Permitting condonation on such tenuous grounds would render the statutory framework



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governing limitation redundant, thereby undermining its fundamental objective of ensuring finality and discouraging undue protraction of litigation. The Limitation Act, 1963 is premised on the principle that litigants must exercise diligence and vigilance in the pursuit of their legal remedies. To relax this standard without compelling reasons would open the floodgates for frivolous delays, defeating the legislative intent of maintaining judicial discipline and efficiency. While this stance may appear stringent in a country like ours, where a lack of awareness regarding legal rights remains prevalent among the general populace, it reflects the legislative intent behind the law. The Limitation Act, 1963 is enacted to serve the collective good, ensuring timely resolution of disputes and fostering legal certainty. It cannot be diluted or relaxed for individual hardships, as doing so would compromise the uniformity and predictability essential for the legal system. The maxim *salus populi suprema lex esto*—the welfare of the common public (society as a whole) is the supreme law—aptly underscores this principle. Laws governing limitation aim to balance individual interests with societal welfare, promoting diligence among litigants and preserving the integrity of judicial processes. An age old adage reads thus:

“It is the duty of all Courts of justice, to take care for the general good of the community, that hard cases do not make bad law.”

8. A perusal of the above-said averments clearly show that no reasonable or plausible explanation has been furnished by the applicant to condone the delay of 228 days in filing the application seeking leave to appeal. Moreover, the explanation given in the application does not inspire



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any confidence. Flimsy grounds have been taken to explain the delay. Perusal of the application would reveal that not only the application has been filed in a mechanical manner but even the mandate of law, which envisages each day's delay has to be explained, is completely amiss in the averments of the application. No worthwhile explanation has been given for the same. No cause much less sufficient cause, as required in law, has been shown to condone the delay of 228 days in filing the application seeking leave to appeal.

The delay is both inordinate and inexplicable. The explanation for the delay contained in the application seeking condonation of delay is wholly unsatisfactory and can hardly be said to be a reasonable, satisfactory or even a proper explanation for seeking condonation of delay. Hence, the application seeking condonation of delay of 228 days in filing the application seeking leave to appeal merits dismissal.

Decision

9. The application (CRM-48129-2024) seeking condonation of delay of 228 days in filing the application seeking leave to appeal is dismissed. Since the application seeking condonation of delay has been dismissed, the application seeking leave to appeal stands dismissed as well accordingly.

10. Pending application(s), if any, shall also stand disposed off.

17.01.2025

Jasmine Kaur

**(SUMEET GOEL)
JUDGE**

Whether speaking/reasoned
Whether reportable

Yes No
Yes No