

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

2026.PHHC.042562



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**CRM-28545-2021 in/&
CRM-A-100-2021**

State of Haryana

....Applicant/Appellant

V/s

Suraj Bhan and another

....Respondents

Date of decision: 18.03.2026

Date of uploading: 18.03.2026

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE SUMEET GOEL

Present: Mr. Gurmeet Singh, AAG, Haryana.

SUMEET GOEL, J. (Oral)

CRM-28545-2021

1. The present application has been filed on behalf of the applicant—State seeking condonation of a delay of 142 days in filing the accompanying appeal. The appeal has been preferred impugning the judgment & order of conviction dated 27.08.2019, whereby the learned Additional Sessions Judge, Sonipat had sentenced the respondents/accused for one day to sit in Court till rising of the court and to pay a fine of Rs.5,000/- each under Section 324 IPC and respondent No.2-Sajjan to pay a fine of Rs.5,000/- under Section 452 IPC. However, the respondents had been acquitted for the charge under Section 3 of SC/ST Act.

2. Learned counsel appearing for the applicant-State, while seeking grant of the prayer for condonation of delay of 142 days, has argued that after

obtaining the certified copy of the impugned judgment and the order on

quantum of sentence dated 27.08.2019, the District Attorney, Sonipat, upon due examination of the record, forwarded his comments to the District Magistrate, Sonipat vide letter No. 3986/DAS/19 dated 19.09.2019, opining that the case was fit for filing an appeal against the said judgment and order on sentence. The said opinion was duly concurred with by the Superintendent of Police, Sonipat. It is further contended that the District Magistrate, Sonipat, upon consideration of the opinion rendered by the District Attorney/Public Prosecutor as well as the material available on record, including the impugned judgment dated 27.08.2019, order on sentence of the even date, and statements of witnesses, formed an independent opinion that the matter warranted filing of an appeal. Accordingly, the complete record along with the proposal was forwarded to the office of the Advocate General, Haryana vide memo No. 5121-22/R dated 26.09.2019. Learned State counsel further submits that upon receipt of the proposal, the matter was duly processed in the office of the Advocate General, Haryana and was placed before the concerned Law Officer for legal opinion. The Law Officer, after examining the case in detail, rendered his opinion, which was subsequently approved by the learned Advocate General, Haryana, thereby affirming the decision to file the appeal.

After completion of all requisite formalities, the appeal has been filed. Learned State counsel submits that the delay in filing the present appeal is neither intentional nor deliberate, but has occurred on account of the procedural movement of the file through various statutory and administrative channels. It has been argued by learned counsel that due to the procedural requirements as detailed above, a delay of 142 days occurred, which was purely procedural and circumstantial. It has further been submitted that the delay was not attributable to any intentional negligence or lack of diligence

but rather resulted from the extensive procedural requirements and formalities inherent in the process of obtaining the necessary sanction. It is, thus, submitted that the circumstances of the case indicate that the delay in filing the instant appeal was neither intentional nor deliberate, and hence, deserves to be condoned.

3. I have heard the learned State counsel for the applicant-State and have perused 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:

I.A liberal approach, undoubtedly, ought to be accorded to a plea for condonation of delay made under Section 5 of The Limitation Act, 1963 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/appeal 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 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 ***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
- 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.”
6. More recently the Hon’ble Supreme Court in case titled as ***Shivamma (Dead) by L.Rs. vs. Karnataka Housing Board and others, Neutral Citation:2025 INSC 1104***, has observed as under:

“171. The next submission that was advanced on behalf of the respondents herein is that, in matters pertaining to condonation of delay, a certain degree of leeway ought to be accorded to the Government and Public Authorities owing to the innate complexities in the way the State apparatus functions. The argument is that due to the inherent bureaucracy and involvement of various departments of different hierarchy which are endemic to the functioning of the State and its instrumentalities, unavoidable delays tend to crop up even without any deliberate intention, and thus, the courts ought to be pragmatic and liberal where the State or any of its instrumentalities is seeking condonation of delay in the filing of the appeal or application, as the case may be. In this regard, reliance was placed on the decision of this Court in **G. Ramegowda, Major & Ors. v. Special Land Acquisition Officer, Bangalore** reported in **(1988) 2 SCC 142.**”

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212. The law as it presently stands, post the decision of Postmaster General (supra), is unambiguous and clear. Condonation of delay is to remain an exception, not the rule. Governmental litigants, no less than private parties, must demonstrate bona fide, sufficient, and cogent cause for delay. Absent such justification, delay cannot be condoned merely on the ground of the identity of the applicant.

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218. However, equally important to note is that wherever, any explanation is sought to be given on account of bureaucratic lethargy and inherent complexities of governmental decision-making, the same more often than not would invariably always is an “excuse”, as experience has shown us, depicted from a long line of decisions of this Court. It is at this stage, where the decision of Postmaster General (supra) assumes significance. It seeks to convey the messages, that court should not be agnostic, to how the State or its instrumentalities, often tend to take the recourse of condonation of delay in a casual manner.”

7. Condonation of delay of 142 days in filing the accompanying appeal is sought for on the following relevant averments:

“The District Attorney Sonipat after obtaining the certified copy of impugned judgment and order on quantum of sentence dated 27.08.2019, sent the comments to the District Magistrate, Sonipat vide letter No.3986/DAS/19 dated 19.09.2019 and opined that this case is fit for filing appeal against the impugned judgment and order

on quantum of sentence dated 27.08.2019 and Superintendent of Police, Sonipat also agreed with the opinion of District Attorney. Sonipat.

2. That the District Magistrate, Sonipat after considering the opinion of the District Attorney, Sonipat/Public Prosecutor and other accompanying documents i.e. impugned judgment dated 27.08.2019 and order on quantum of sentence dated 27.08.2019, statements of witnesses and other material on record opined that this case is fit for filing appeal before the Hon'ble High Court and sent all the relevant document to the office of Advocate General, Haryana vide separate memo No.5121-22/R dated 26.09.2019, which was received in the office of Advocate General, Haryana.

3. That once the proposal for filing appeal was received in the office of Advocate General, Haryana, the case was put up for seeking opinion before the Law Officer. The Law Officer gave his legal opinion and the same was approved by the learned Advocate General, Haryana.”

8. A perusal of the above-said averments clearly shows that no reasonable or plausible explanation has been furnished by the applicant-State for condonation of the delay of 142 days in filing the accompanying appeal. The present application, apart from being bereft of specific details or particulars that may reflect bona fides on the part of the applicant-State in pursuing its case, rather indicates a deliberate attempt to unnecessarily entangle the respondents-accused in prolonged litigation. The applicant-State has failed to provide any concrete explanation or documentary proof to demonstrate its genuine efforts in pursuing the matter within the prescribed time limit. No cause, much less sufficient cause as required in law, has been shown to justify or condone such a significant delay. The delay is both inordinate and inexplicable. Merely attributing it to procedural or unforeseen circumstances, without supporting details or evidence, falls short of the legal threshold for condonation. The applicant-State has neither exhibited continuous diligence in the matter nor presented any exceptional or

unavoidable circumstances that could reasonably explain such an extensive delay.

8.1 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. In the facts and circumstances of the case as narrated hereinabove, the application seeking condonation of delay of 142 days in filing the accompanying appeal merits dismissal.

Decision

9. The application (*CRM-28545-2021*) seeking condonation of delay of 142 days in filing the accompanying appeal is dismissed. Since the application seeking condonation of delay has been dismissed, the main appeal stands dismissed as well accordingly.

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

(SUMEET GOEL)
JUDGE

March 18, 2026
Naveen

Whether speaking/reasoned:	Yes/No
Whether reportable:	Yes/No