

IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB & HARYANA
AT CHANDIGARH

264+112+114+115

1.		CWP-1950-2026 (O&M) Date of decision: 27.03.2026
Karanbeer Singh and others	Versus	Petitioners
State of Punjab and others		Respondents
2.		CWP-2103-2026
Ram Bhagat and another	Versus	Petitioners
State of Punjab and another		Respondents
3.		CWP-3983-2026
Arbaaz Bhullar and another	Versus	Petitioners
State of Punjab and others		Respondents
4.		CWP-4186-2026
Tanvir Kohli and others	Versus	Petitioners
State of Punjab and others		Respondents
5.		CWP-4236-2026
Shubhreet Lalli and others	Versus	Petitioners
State of Punjab and others		Respondents
6.		CWP-4357-2026
Parminder Kaur	Versus	Petitioner
State of Punjab and others		Respondents

CWP-1950-2026 & connected matters		-2-
7.		CWP-1735-2026
Gagandeep Sharma and others		Petitioners
Versus		
Punjab Public Service Commission (PPSC) & anr.		Respondents
8.		CWP-3796-2026
Sukhmanpreet Singh and others		Petitioners
Versus		
Punjab Public Service Commission (PPSC) & anr.		Respondents
9.		CWP-3962-2026
Abhishek Singla and others		Petitioners
Versus		
State of Punjab and another		Respondents
10.		CWP-4376-2026
Tejkultarn Singh Sohi		Petitioner
Versus		
State of Punjab and others		Respondents
11.		CWP-4892-2026
Riya Grover and others		Petitioners
Versus		
State of Punjab and others		Respondents
12.		CWP-5179-2026
Divjot Kaur		Petitioner
Versus		
State of Punjab and another		Respondents
13.		CWP-5993-2026
Satwinder Kaur		Petitioner
Versus		
State of Punjab and others		Respondents

CWP-1950-2026 & connected matters		-3-
14.		CWP-2011-2026
Agampreet Singh		Petitioner
	Versus	
State of Punjab and others		Respondents
15.		CWP-5705-2026
Anmol Singh Sidhu		Petitioner
	Versus	
Punjab Public Service Commission and another		Respondents
16.		CWP-5902-2026
Ramandeep Kaur and another		Petitioners
	Versus	
Punjab Public Service Commission (PPSC) & anr.		Respondents
17.		CWP-5960-2026
Akanksha Sharma and others		Petitioners
	Versus	
State of Punjab and others		Respondents
18.		CWP-6713-2026
Alka Nischal and others		Petitioners
	Versus	
The State of Punjab and another		Respondents
19.		CWP-8362-2026
Manwinder Singh		Petitioner
	Versus	
State of Punjab and others		Respondents
20.		CWP-8439-2026
Rohit Suman		Petitioner
	Versus	
State of Punjab and others		Respondents

21.

CWP-8942-2026

Manjeet Singh

.....Petitioner

Versus

State of Punjab and another

.....Respondents

22.

CWP-9042-2026

Deepjyot Singh

.....Petitioner

Versus

State of Punjab and another

.....Respondents

23.

CWP-9173-2026

Brahmjot Singh

.....Petitioner

Versus

State of Punjab and another

.....Respondents

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE NAMIT KUMAR

Present : Mr. Shreenath Khemka, Advocate with
Mr. Vikram Singh Brar, Ms. Arushi Lamba Brar,
Mr. Vishavjeet S. Beniwal and
Ms. Tvesha Gupta, Advocates for the petitioner(s)
in CWP Nos.1950, 4236, 4357, 4376, 4892, 8362, 8439
& 4186 of 2026.

Mr. Pranshul Dhull, Advocate
for the petitioners in CWP-2103-2026.

Mr. Saurav Bhatia, Advocate and
Mr. Navdeep S. Khokhar, Advocate
for the petitioners in CWP-3983-2026.

Mr. Lovepreet Handa, Advocate with
Mr. G.S. Thind, Advocate for the petitioner(s)
in CWP Nos.3796, 5902 & 1735 of 2026.

Mr. Raghav Goyal Chandiware, Advocate
for the petitioners in CWP-3962-2026 & CWP-9042-2026.

Mr. Karanbir Singh Randhawa, Advocate and
Mr. Harmanpreet Singh Mander, Advocate
for the petitioner in CWP-5179-2026.

Mr. Baljeet Singh Sidhu, Advocate
for the petitioners in CWP-5993-2026.

Mr. Ravinder Malik, Advocate
for the petitioner in CWP Nos.2011 of 2026.

Mr. Vedant Setia, Advocate
for the petitioner in CWP-5705-2026.

Mr. Vinod Kumar Polist, Advocate
for the petitioners in CWP-5960-2026.

Mr. Deepak Verma, Advocate and
Mr. Kshitiz Goel, Advocate
for the petitioners in CWP-6713-2026.

Mr. A.S. Nirmaan, Advocate
for the petitioner(s) in CWP-8942-2026.

Mr. R.S. Baweja, Advocate
for the petitioner in CWP-9173-2026 (through VC).

Mr. Charanpreet Singh, AAG, Punjab.

NAMIT KUMAR, J. (ORAL)

1. This judgment shall dispose of above-referred writ petitions as similar questions of facts and law are involved in them. For the sake of convenience, the facts are being taken from CWP-1950-2026 titled as Karanbeer Singh and others v. State of Punjab and others.
2. The instant petition has been filed by the petitioners under Article 226 of the Constitution of India, for claiming the following reliefs:-

*“A. Writ of Certiorari against the Revised Answer Keys dated 06.01.2026 (**Annexures P-11 & P-12**) to the extent that vague Questions were not deleted (Question No. 26 of Paper-II (CSAT) & Questions No. 13, 73, 94, 99 of Paper-1 (General Studies)) and that patently incorrect Answers were not revised (Questions No. 1, 79 of Paper-I (General Studies)).*

*B. Writ of Certiorari against the Result announced vide Public Notice dated 09.01.2026 (**Annexure P-14**) to the extent that the Petitioners' names were not shortlisted for the Main Examination Stage.*

*C. Writ of Mandamus directing that the Answer Keys dated 06.01.2026 (**Annexures P-11 & P-12**) & the Result*

announced vide Public Notice dated 09.01.2026 (Annexure P-14) be revised in terms of Para No. 8 of the present Writ Petition.

xxx xxx xxx xxx xxx”

3. The brief facts of the case, as have been pleaded in the present petition, are that respondent No.3-Punjab Public Service Commission (hereinafter referred to as 'Commission') advertised 322 posts of Punjab Civil Services (Executive Branch) and other allied posts (later on increased to 337 posts, vide addendum dated 03.09.2025) to be filled on the basis of Punjab State Civil Services Combined Competitive Examination, 2025, vide advertisement No.20251 dated 02.01.2025 (Annexure P-1). The petitioners applied pursuant to the said advertisement and appeared in the preliminary examination conducted on 07.12.2025. The revised answer keys were released on 06.01.2026, on the basis of which candidates were short-listed for the main examination on 09.01.2026; however, none of the petitioners were short-listed for the main examination. It has further been pleaded that the petitioners fell short of their respective cut-offs by only 02 marks, i.e., one question. It has further been pleaded that both Paper-I (General Studies) and Paper-II (CSAT) were conducted as MCQ-based tests on 07.12.2025. On 08.12.2025, the Commission released the answer keys, and issued a public notice inviting objections on the same from the candidates. The candidates were given 04 days' time to submit their objections by uploading the same on the official website of the Commission. The petitioners submitted their objections, along with requisite supporting material, within the prescribed time. The petitioners submitted their objections against Questions No.1, 13, 73, 79, 94 and 99 in the following manner:-

NO.	NAME	ROLL NO.	OBJECTIONS (SET-A)
1.	Karanbeer Singh	129773	13,73,79,94
2.	Ravinder Singh Atwal	101155	1, 73, 94, 95, 99
3.	Akash Jindal	164961	41, 73, 79
4.	Gurtaj Singh	176218	1, 41, 73, 94, 99
5.	Beant Singh	180965	1, 94, 13, 73
6.	Anju Rani	101751	1, 13, 73, 74, 94, 99
7.	Ramneet Kaur	111648	1, 41, 73, 79, 94
8.	Anuj Khanna	121282	1, 75, 79, 94, 99
9.	Lakshya Kumar	169709	1, 13, 94
10.	Nimrat Sangha	127427	1, 13, 73, 79, 94, 99

4. Thereafter, on 06.01.2026, the Commission released the following revised answer keys:-

*“**Paper-I (General Studies) 5 Questions were revised—4 Questions were deleted (Question No.25, 65, 80, 95) and the Answer to 1 Question was changed (Question No.41).***
8 Grace marks were given for the 4 Deleted Questions.

Paper-II (CSAT) 5 Questions were revised—4 Questions were deleted (Question No.8, 32, 77, 80) and the Answer to 1 Question was changed in which two Answers were marked as correct (Question No.26).
10 Grace marks were given for the 4 Deleted Questions.”

5. On the basis of the revised answer keys, the cut-offs were announced on 09.01.2026 and the result was announced on 10.01.2026, however, none of the petitioners were short-listed for the main examination and all of them were short of their respective cut-offs by only 02 marks i.e. 01 question and the marks scored by the petitioners are as under:-

NO.	NAME	CATEGORY	CUT-OFF	MARKS SCORED
1.	Karanbeer Singh	General	100	98
2.	Ravinder Singh Atwal	Mazhbi/Balmiki	72	70
3.	Akash Jindal	General	100	98
4.	Gurtaj Singh	LDESM (General)	100	98

5.	Beant Singh	General	100	98
6.	Anju Rani	Mazhbi/Balmiki	72	70
7.	Ramneet Kaur	General	100	98
8.	Anuj Khanna	SC Others	88	86
9.	Lakshya Kumar	General	100	98
10.	Nimrat Sangha	General	100	98

6. On issuance of notice of motion, the Commission has filed short reply by way of affidavit of Vyom Bharadvaj, PCS, Secretary Examinations, Punjab Public Service Commission, Patiala, Punjab, on behalf of respondent No.3, wherein the following stand has been taken:-

“4. That it is pertinent to mention here that PPSC has been established under Article 315 of the Constitution of India, with the basic purpose of recruiting officials in various departments of the Government as per the requisitions sent by the Government from time to time. It is submitted here that Commission conducted the Preliminary examination regarding ibid posts on 07.12.2025, thereafter, answer keys dated 08.12.2025 regarding Paper-I i.e. General Studies (Annexure P-7) and Paper-II i.e. CSAT (Annexure P-8) uploaded on Commission's official website.

5. That it is submitted that the candidates were allowed to put up objections to answer key if any vide public notice dated 08.12.2025 (Annexure P-9), and were given four days from 08.12.2025 to 12.12.2025 regarding the same. Relevant extract of the notice dated 08.12.2025 is reiterated for perusal of the Hon'ble Court:

*"2. Candidates are being given **four days** to deliberate and submit the objections. The objections will be referred to a body of experts. The issue may need to be referred to the paper setter also, for review. A decision is taken by the Commission based on all the opinions. The Commission may change the answer or allow more than one answer if recommended by the experts or withdraw the question altogether, based on the rationale given by the experts and Commission's decision thereon. In case, a question is withdrawn, all candidates will be given two (02) marks in Paper-1 (General Studies) and two and half (2.5) marks in Paper-2 (CSAT) irrespective of the fact whether the question has been attempted or not attempted by the candidate."*

6. That it is submitted that in response to above, various

objections raised by the candidates regarding the Answer Key were received at Commission office. Afterwards, objections received from the candidates along with the petitioners, regarding the Answer Key, were referred to the subject experts for advice/opinion. It is clarified here that objection regarding Question Number 74 was not received from the petitioner no. 6, Anju Rani (Roll No. 101751), but was received from another candidate. In reference to this, the Commission had made a decision on 21.11.2025, relevant excerpt of which is mentioned hereinafter for the kind perusal of this Hon'ble Court:

"The Commission noted that many objections do not have sufficient proof/evidence attached to support the candidates' claims. The Commission also noted that as per an affidavit put forward by UPSC in the Hon'ble Supreme Court (Writ Petition (civil) No(s). 118 of 2024, Himansu Kumar & ORS. Versus The Union of India & ANR) UPSC is making it compulsory to attach three authoritative sources in case a candidate files an objection. On these lines, the Commission hereby decides that in the interest of entertaining only genuine objections and efficiency in revision of answer key, while also keeping in mind fairness and ease for candidates, proof from at least two authoritative sources must be attached by the candidates along with each of their objections in order to be considered for review by expert panel. The Commission reserves the right to decide which source is authoritative."

As per above, the sources sent by the candidates along with the objections raised regarding these questions and answers were very carefully examined by the Controller of Examination along with Chairman, Punjab Public Service Commission. In light of Para no. 3 of the public notice dated 08.12.2025 (Annexure P-9) which provides that the Commission reserves the right to decide whether the sources attached are authentic or not and as per the Commission's decision dated 21.11.2025 it was decided that the sources submitted with regard to Question No. 74 and some other disputed questions/ answers are not authentic, therefore, in view of the above said decision of the Commission, Question No. 74 and some other disputed questions/ answers were not sent to the subject experts. Accordingly, objections received from the petitioners, regarding the Answer Key, were referred to the subject experts for advice/opinion except Question No. 74.

7. That it is pertinent to mention here that after obtaining advice/opinion from the subject experts, the Revised/ Final Answer Key was prepared on the basis of advice/ opinion received from the subject experts and published vide Public Notice dated 10.01.2026 (Annexure R-1) regarding

Paper-I i.e. General Studies and Paper-II i.e. CSAT on Commission's website. However, it is also clarified here that Revised/ Final Answer key was signed on 06.01.2026 and subsequently, published vide Public Notice dated 10.01.2026 and not on 06.01.2026 as asserted by the petitioners.

8. That it is also imperative to mention here that the cancellation of the specific questions was executed on the basis of the advice/ opinion received from the Subject Experts. Furthermore, to preclude any prejudice or injustice against any candidate and in strict adherence to the principles of Natural Justice, every candidate has been awarded full marks in lieu of the cancelled questions. Thus, all the actions of the Commission are under the ambit of law and there is no violation with regard to the same.”

7. The matter was heard by this Court on 07.03.2026 and after having heard the learned counsel for the parties, the same was referred to the Vice Chancellor, Panjab University, Chandigarh, with a request to constitute a panel of 03 Subject Experts to examine the Questions Set-A (Question No.1, Question No.13, Question No.73, Question No.79, Question No.94 and Question No.99). The order dated 07.03.2026 reads as under:-

“Learned counsels for the petitioners, inter-alia, contend that the petitioners are candidates under the Advertisement dated 02.01.2025 for 331 posts of PCS (Executive Branch) and other allied posts and are aggrieved by the Revised Answer Keys dated 06.01.2026, vide which candidates were shortlisted for the Main Examination. It has further been contended that the petitioners were short of their respective cut-offs by only 2 or 4 marks i.e. 1 or 2 questions in Paper-1 (General Studies). It has further been contended that in a multiple choice questions based test, if the question is vague or if none/multiple answers are correct, then the entire question ought to be deleted and further for a qualifying examination, where the stipulation is to secure 40% marks, the grace marks could not have been awarded for the deleted questions to every candidate as the same would defeat the 40% marks requirement and further where revised Answer keys were patently erroneous for having retained incorrect Answers for various questions such as Question No.1, Question No.13, Question No.73, Question No.79, Question No.94, Question No.99 (Set-A). The

following said 6 Questions were incorrectly framed/marked:-

QUESTION (SET-A)	ANSWER AS PER COMMISSION	OBJECTION
1	D	B Statement No.2 was correct.
13	A	- All Options were incorrect because Bipin Chandra Pal had authored 2 Journals—Bande Matram & New India.
73	D	- Question was vague and incapable of being answered because it was not specified on what basis the rivers were to be arranged i.e. catchment area or mouth or capacity.
79	C	B Statement No.3 was incorrect because Parliament has the power to increase a tax by way of legislation.
94	C	- Question was vague because Rabindranath Tagore never got the Nobel Peace Prize.
99	B	- All Options were incorrect because Ala-ud-Din Alam Shah (1417-1478) was also the contemporary of Guru Nanak Dev Ji (1469-1539).

Learned counsels placed reliance upon the decision dated 07.05.2025 of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in **Siddhi Sandeep Ladda Vs. Consortium of National Law Universities and another (2025 INSC 714)**, Division Bench Judgments of this Court in LPA-286-2022 titled as **Amit Kumar Sharma Vs. Municipal Corporation, Chandigarh and others, dated 29.05.2025** and in CWP-17608-2019 titled as **Rustam Garg Vs. Punjab and Haryana High Court, Chandigarh dated 08.08.2025** and judgment of Delhi High Court in **Writ Petition (C) No.17138 of 2024 titled as 'Aditya Singh (Minor) v. Consortium NLUs', decided on 20.12.2024**. It has further been contended that as per public notice dated 26.02.2026, the candidates who have been shortlisted for MAINS Examination have been asked to fill their online application forms by 08.03.2026 upto 11.59 P.M. failing which they will not able to download their Admit Cards for

the MAINS Examination. It has also been contended that in LPA No. 3444-2025, relating to the matter of other candidates i.e. PCS(Executive Branch) Sports person Punjab (No. 75), a Division Bench of this Court, vide orders dated 01.02.2026, has allowed the candidates to provisionally participate in the Main Examination which is pending for 08.05.2026.

*Per contra, learned State Counsel has fervently and vehemently opposed the contentions raised by the learned counsel for the petitioners and submitted that the petitioners are not eligible to participate in the main examination and this Court should not interfere in the academic matters and has placed reliance upon the judgments of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in **Ran Vijay Singh and others v. State of U.P. and others : 2018(1) SCT 334** and **U.P.P.S.C. Through its Chairman and another v. Rahul Singh and another : 2018(3) SCT 298** and judgments of this High Court in **Balraj Singh v. State of Haryana and others : 2025 NCPHHC 69684**; **Pratima Yadav and others v. State of Haryana and others : 2025 NCPHHC 139202**; **CWP No.11695 of 2023 titled as 'Navdeep Kaur v. State of Punjab and others'**, decided on **01.06.2023**; **CWP No.748 of 2018 titled as 'Paramjeet Kaur and another v. State of Punjab and another'**, decided on **03.12.2024** and **Amit v. State of Haryana and another : 2026 NCPHHC 4557**. He has also submitted that revised answers key was uploaded after evaluating the objections raised by the candidates, which were got examined and verified from the Experts panel by the Commission.*

Heard learned counsel for the parties and perused the record with their able assistance.

In the given facts and circumstances of the cases and after due deliberations and discussions and in order to balance the equity, this Court is of the view that at this stage the matter may be referred to Vice Chancellor, Panjab University, Chandigarh with a request to constitute a panel of three subject experts to examine the questions Set-A (Question No.1, Question No.13, Question No.73, Question No.79, Question No.94, Question No.99).

The Committee shall submit its report in the sealed cover, along with original record of the Expert Committee, on or before the adjourned date.

Learned State counsel is directed to provide the relevant material to the office of Vice Chancellor, Panjab University, Chandigarh, within a period of three working days from today.

Adjourned to 24.03.2026.

To be taken up at 02:00 P.M.

A copy of this order be sent to the office of Vice Chancellor, Panjab University, Chandigarh, by 09.03.2026 for information and necessary compliance.

A photocopy of this order be placed on the files of other connected cases.”

8. In pursuance to the said order, report dated 16.03.2026 has been received from the Subject Experts, through the Vice Chancellor, Panjab University, Chandigarh, wherein it has been stated that a panel of following Subject Experts was constituted to examine the Questions i.e. Question No.1, Question No.13, Question No.73, Question No.79, Question No.94 and Question No.99 of Set-A of General Studies, Paper-I, of Punjab State Civil Services Combined Competitive (Preliminary) Examination, 2025:-

Department of Political Science	Department of History	Department of Geography
Prof. Ashutosh Kumar	Prof. Anju Suri	Prof. Ravinder Kaur
Prof. Deepak Singh	Prof. G.C. Chauhan	Prof. Gaurav Kalotra
Prof. Navjot	Prof. Priyatosh Sharma	Prof. Simrit Kahlon

9. The Expert Committee has examined all the questions along with their answers and their unanimous opinion with regard to (Set-A) Question No.1 is that Answer 'D' is correct; with regard to Question No.13, Answer 'A' is correct; with regard to Question No.73, Answer 'D' is correct; with regard to Question No.79, Answer 'C' is correct; with regard to Question No.94, Answer 'C' is correct and with regard to Question No.99, Answer 'B' is correct. In support of its opinion, the Expert Committee has also annexed the necessary reference material/evidence on the basis of which the said opinion has been formed which is as under :-

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I attest to the
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order/judgment

CWP-1950-2026 & connected matters

Details of Expert Opinions regarding 6 Questions on the basis of which the answer key of Punjab State Civil Services Combined Competitive Preliminary Examination 2025 held on 07.12.2025 was finalized but then challenged in CWP No.1950 of 2026 (O&M) Kambir Singh and ORS V/s State of Punjab and ORS								
QUESTIONS FROM GENERAL STUDIES-HISTORY (ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL HISTORY)								
Q.NO.	DETAIL OF QUESTIONS	ANSWER AS PER PAPER SETTER	ANSWER SUGGESTED BY THE CANDIDATE	OPINION AND REMARKS OF EXPERT-I DR. RENU THAKUR, PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF ANCIENT INDIAN HISTORY, CULTURE AND ARCHAEOLOGY, PANJAB UNIVERSITY, CHANDIGARH	OPINION AND REMARKS OF EXPERT-II DR. BENUDHAR PATRA, PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY, POST GRADUATE, GOVT. COLLEGE, SECTOR-11, CHANDIGARH	EXPERT COMMITTEE APPOINTED AS PER ORDER OF HON'BLE PUNJAB AND HARYANA HIGH COURT UNDER VICE CHANCELLOR, PANJAB UNIVERSITY, CHANDIGARH		
						<u>OPINION, REMARKS AND SIGNATURE OF EXPERT</u> <u>NAME:</u> G.C. Chauhan <u>DESIGNATION:</u> Prof.	<u>OPINION, REMARKS AND SIGNATURE OF EXPERT</u> <u>NAME:</u> ANJU SURI <u>DESIGNATION:</u> PROFESSOR	<u>OPINION, REMARKS AND SIGNATURE OF EXPERT</u> <u>NAME:</u> PRIYATOSH SHARMA <u>DESIGNATION:</u> Professor
1	Consider the following statements on ancient history based on archaeological and literary sources : 1. It is quite likely that the Indus Valley people recognized the importance of cow for its milk/dairy products and horse for its agility in welfare. 2. the Vajapeya sacrifice was performed by the kings in the later Vedic period to bestow divinity on the king. Which of the above statements is/are correct ? (a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2	D	(I) A (II) B (III) C	Answer 'D' is Correct Objection unfounded. 'Vajpayee' sacrifice was a rejuvenation ceremony to increase strength and raised status from <u>raja</u> to <u>Samrat</u> . See A.L. Basham, The <u>wonder That was India</u> Calcutta, 1989, p.43, p.83	Answer D is correct, because so far there is no clearcut evidence of the remains of the horse from the discovery of the Indus Valley Civilization. “ the Harapaan culture was not horse-centred. Neither the bones of a horse nor its representations have been traced in early and mature Harappan cultures.” Source: R.S. Sharma, India's Ancient Past, p.79, D.N.Jha, Ancient India, p.34 Similarly, the Vajapeya sacrifice was performed by the kings in the Later vedic period not to bestow divinity on the king. The vajapeya sacrifice was “believed not only to restore the strength of a middle-aged king but also to raise him from a simple raja to a samrat, a monarch who owed allegiance to none and controlled several kings.” Source: F.Maxmuller(ed.), Sacred Books of the East, Satapatha Brahmana, pp.xxiii,-xxv & 4; A.L.Basham, The Wonder That was India (Rupa, 1992), pp. 43 & 83; D.N. Jha, Ancient India, p.59;	Option (D) is Correct Answer sd/- G.C. Chauhan	The option (D) is the right answer which has been given by the paper-setter. Vajapayee was not the only yajna to bestow divinity as it was done prior to Ashvamedha yajna. sd/- Anju Suri	The answer given by the paper setter is right because Vajapayee was not the only yajna to bestow divinity as it was done prior to Asmedyajna. (D) sd/- Priyatosh Sharma

QWP-1950-2026 & connected matters

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I attest to the accuracy and
authenticity of this
order/judgment

CWP-1950-2026 & connected matters

Details of Expert Opinions regarding 6 Questions on the basis of which the answer key of Punjab State Civil Services Combined Competitive Preliminary Examination 2025 held on 07.12.2025 was finalized but then challenged in CWP No.1950 of 2026 (O&M) of Harbinder Singh and ORS V/s State of Punjab and ORS								
QUESTIONS FROM GENERAL STUDIES-GEOGRAPHY								
Q.NO.	DETAIL OF QUESTIONS	ANSWER AS PER PAPER SETTER	ANSWER SUGGESTED BY THE CANDIDATE	OPINION AND REMARKS OF EXPERT-I SH. NAVJOT SINGH, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, GEOGRAPHY, GOVT. MOHINDRA COLLEGE, PATIALA	OPINION AND REMARKS OF EXPERT-II SH. SHARNJIT SINGH, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, GEOGRAPHY, SMHS GOVT. COLLEGE, PHASE-6, SAS NAGAR	EXPERT COMMITTEE APPOINTED AS PER ORDER OF HON'BLE PUNJAB AND HARYANA HIGH COURT UNDER VICE CHANCELLOR, PANJAB UNIVERSITY, CHANDIGARH	OPINION, REMARKS AND SIGNATURE OF EXPERT NAME: RAVINDER KAUR GAURAV KALOTRA SIMRIT KAHLON DESIGNATION:PROFESSORS	OPINION, REMARKS AND SIGNATURE OF EXPERT NAME: DESIGNATION:
73	What is the correct East-to-West order of the following rivers of India ? (a) Baitarni, Damodar, Mahanadi, Pennar (b) Damodar, Mahanadi, Pennar, Baitarni (c) Damodar, Mahanadi, Baitarni, Pennar (d) Damodar, Baitarni, Mahanadi, Pennar	D	(I) A (II) B (III) C (IV) D (V) A, C (VI) A AND C (VII) A OR C (VIII) A, C OR NONE (IX) ALL (X) ERROR IN (XI) NO OPTION (XII) NONE (XIII) NONE OF T	Correct Answer is 'D' India water Resource information system Ministry of Jal Shakti DOWR, RD & GR Natinal Hydrology Project http://indiawris.gov.in	The question asked is: give the correct East-to-West order of the Baitarni, Damodar, Mahanadi, Pennar rivers of India. For the clarification, references have been taken from the Atlas book, Indian River maps and various websites from the internet. It is specific to mention here that all the four rivers in the question flow in the eastern side of the country. They finally drain into the Bay of Bengal. The river Baitarni (Vaitarni) rises in the state of Odisha and after flowing through the state finally enters the Bay of Bengal. The river Damodar rises in the Chhota Nagpur plateau in the state of Jharkhand , flows through Jharkhand & West Bengal, joins river Hooghly then finally drains into the Bay of Bengal. The river Mahanadi rises in the highlands of Chhattisgarh . Then after flowing through the state of Odisha, drains into the Bay of Bengal. The river Pennar rises in the Nandi Hills of Karnataka and after flowing through the state of Andhra Pradesh, it drains into Bay of Bengal. Therefore if we consider the East to west order of these four rivers (based on the location of the states where these rivers have originated), it comes out as : Damodar (Jharkhand), Baitarni (Odisha), Mahanadi	In establishing the east to west order of rivers the location of the mouth of the river is the most appropriate and enduring indicator going by the longitude of the mouth of the said rivers, option 'D' is the most appropriate answer. sd/- Simrit Kahlon sd/- Ravinder Kaur sd/- Gaurav Kalotra	-	-

(Chhattisgarh) and Pennar (Karnataka). Further, if we consider the mouth of these four rivers (where these rivers end/finally fall or drain into the sea/ocean/bay), the east to west order remains the same ie Damodar, Baitarni, Mahanadi and Pennar. Hence from both points of view ie the state of origin of the river as well as the mouth of the river, **the answer given by the Paper Setter (option D) is justified.**

Writ
2025-03-28-12:08
I attest to the accuracy and
authenticity of this
order/judgment

CWP-1950-2026 & connected matters

Details of Expert Opinions regarding 6 Questions on the basis of which the answer key of Punjab State Civil Services Combined Competitive Preliminary Examination 2025 held on 07.12.2025 was finalized but then challenged in CWP No.1950 of 2026 (O&M) Kanbir Singh and ORS V/s State of Punjab and ORS								
QUESTIONS FROM GENERAL STUDIES-POLITICAL SCIENCE								
Q.NO.	DETAIL OF QUESTIONS	ANSWER AS PER PAPER SETTER	ANSWER SUGGESTED BY THE CANDIDATE	OPINION AND REMARKS OF EXPERT-I DR. PAMPA MUKHERJEE, PROFESSOR AND CHAIRPERSON, DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, PANJAB UNIVERSITY, CHANDIGARH	OPINION AND REMARKS OF EXPERT-II DR. PRABHPREET SINGH, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, DAV COLLEGE FOR WOMEN, FEROZEPUR CANTT.	EXPERT COMMITTEE APPOINTED AS PER ORDER OF HON'BLE PUNJAB AND HARYANA HIGH COURT UNDER VICE CHANCELLOR, PANJAB UNIVERSITY, CHANDIGARH		
						OPINION, REMARKS AND SIGNATURE OF EXPERT NAME: ASHUTOSH KUMAR DESIGNATION: Prof essor	OPINION, REMARKS AND SIGNATURE OF EXPERT NAME: Deepak K. Singh DESIGNATION: Professor	OPINION, REMARKS AND SIGNATURE OF EXPERT NAME: Navjot DESIGNATION: Professor
79	Consider the following Constitutional Provisions : 1. No demand for a grant shall be made except on the recommendation of the President. 2. No tax shall be levied or collected except by the authority of law. 3. Parliament can reduce or abolish a tax but cannot increase it. How many of the above statements is/are correct ? (a) Only one (b) Only two (c) All three (d) None of the above	C	(I) B (II) C	Correct Answer is as per Answer Key of the Commission – C -(Art 117-Constitution of India Bare Act). It may be noted that the Article 117 directly does not specify that Parliament cannot increase tax but it is has to inferred and interpreted when the ARTICLE 117(1) States that “no recommendation shall be required.....making provision for the reduction or abolition of any tax”. In other words, it requires an amendment for increasing tax and Parliament on its own cannot increase it.	Correct Answer is – C, Source-1-Article 113 (3), 117, 265 See Constitution on India Source – 2 https://www.iitk.ac.in/wc/data/coi-4March2016.pdf ?	C is correct (Explanation attached) duly signed by members sd/- Ashutosh Kumar	C is correct (Explanation is attached herewith) sd/- Deepak K. Singh	C is Correct (Explanation is attached herewith) sd/- Navjot

Details of Expert Opinions regarding 6 Questions on the basis of which the answer key of Punjab State Civil Services Combined Competitive Preliminary Examination 2025 held on 07.12.2025 was finalized but then challenged in CWP No.1950 of 2026 (O&M) of Ranbir Singh and ORS V/s State of Punjab and ORS								
QUESTIONS FROM GENERAL STUDIES-HISTORY (MODERN AND PUNJAB HISTORY & CULTURE)								
Q.NO.	DETAIL OF QUESTIONS	ANSWER AS PER PAPER SETTER	ANSWER SUGGESTED BY THE CANDIDATE	OPINION AND REMARKS OF EXPERT-I DR. SHEENA PALL, PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY, CENTRE FOR DISTANCE AND ONLINE EDUCATION, PANJAB UNIVERSITY, CHANDIGARH	OPINION AND REMARKS OF EXPERT-II DR. MOHAMMAD IDRISH, PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY, INCHARGE, SHAHEED UDHAM SINGH CHAIR, PUNJABI UNIVERSITY, PATIALA	EXPERT COMMITTEE APPOINTED AS PER ORDER OF HON'BLE PUNJAB AND HARYANA HIGH COURT UNDER VICE CHANCELLOR, PANJAB UNIVERSITY, CHANDIGARH		
						OPINION, REMARKS AND SIGNATURE OF EXPERT NAME: G.C. Chauhan DESIGNATION: Prof	OPINION, REMARKS AND SIGNATURE OF EXPERT NAME: ANJU SURI DESIGNATION: PROFESSOR	OPINION, REMARKS AND SIGNATURE OF EXPERT NAME: Priyatosh Sharma DESIGNATION: Professor
94	In which magazine did the Noble Peace Prize awardee Rabindranath Tagore write several stories and poems on the lives of Sikh Gurus ? (a) Gitanjali (b) Jibansmriti (c) Balak (d) Sadhana	C	(I) A (II) B (III) C (IV) D (V) E (VI) NONE (VII) WRONG QUES (VIII) INVALID (IX) A OR C (X) NO ONE (XI) NEITHER (XII) OTHER (XIII) ERROR QUS	C is the correct answer, however there has been some confusion due to an error in the question. The question may be retained.	The correct answer is (C). The objection of the candidate is related to the Nobel Prize. It has no essence of the question. Therefore, the answer is correct as per the key of the paper setter.	Q. No.94 The option (C) right	The option (C) of Q.No.94 is right and the mistake in question does not effect the quality and relevance of the answer (C)	The answer is right and the mistake in question does not effect the quality and relevance of Answer (C)

QWP-1950-2026 & connected matters

			(XIV) BALAK (XV) NO OPTION (XVI) WRONG (XVII) INCOR QUES					
99	Which of the following Sultanate/Mughal rulers were the contemporaries of Guru Nanak Dev ji ? 1. Ala-ud-Din Alam Shah 2. Ibrahim Lodi 3. Sikandar Lodi 4. Bahlol Lodi 5. Humayun 6. Babur 7. Akbar Choose the correct option : (a) 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 only (b) 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 only (c) 2, 4, 5 and 6 only (d) 3, 5, 6 and 7 only	B	(I) A (II) C (III) A AND B (IV) NONE (V) NOT GIVEN (VI) NO CORRECT (VII) A OR B	The question as well as the answer are both correct and may be retained. For reference see, J.S. Grewal, Guru Nanak in History, Chandigarh: Panjab University, 1969, pp.1-9.	The correct answer is (B), 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 only, i.e. Ibrahim Lodi (1451-1489 CE), Sikandar Lodi (1489-1517 CE), Bahlol Lodi (1517-1526 CE), Humayun (Overlap: only 1530-1539 CE of his first reign) and Babur (1526-1530 CE) were contemporaries of Guru Nanak Dev Ji.	The correct Ans is (B) sd/- G.C. Chauhan	The option (B) as per the paper-setter is correct. sd/- Anju Suri	The answer as per paper setter is correct (B) sd/- Priyatosh Sharma

10. In nutshell, after having perused the report of the Expert Committee, appointed in terms of the order passed by this Court dated 07.03.2026, has reiterated the revised answer keys, which was earlier examined by the Expert Committee constituted by the Commission, whereby the objections submitted by the petitioners were duly considered and no error has been found with regard to above six disputed question.

11. On 24.03.2026, the matter was adjourned for today on the request of learned counsel for the parties, enabling them to go through the report of the Expert Committee constituted by the Panjab University in pursuance of the order dated 07.03.2026 passed by this Court.

12. Learned counsel for the petitioners have reiterated the contentions raised on the previous date of hearing i.e. 07.03.2026 and submit that once the questions are vague or ambiguous and not free from doubt, and having more than one correct answers, have to be deleted from consideration. He further submits that the revised answer key of Paper-I (General Studies) was patently erroneous, for having retained incorrect answers and question No.79, which pertains to subject of law, be examined by the High Court, being an expert in the field of law and can interfere in view of the law laid down by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in *Siddhi Sandeep Ladda's case (supra)*. He further submits that Paper-II (CSAT) was a qualifying exam, wherein the stipulation was to secure minimum 40% marks and the Commission could not have awarded 10 grace marks after deleting 4 questions out of 80, as the same diluted the 40% threshold and instead, the candidates ought to have been evaluated to meet the 40% requirement of the

remainder questions i.e. 76 questions.

13. On the other hand, learned State counsel has vehemently opposed the contentions raised by the learned counsel for the petitioners and submits that the petitioners are not eligible to participate in the main examination and they have no cause of action to invoke the writ jurisdiction of this Court. He further submits that the process of selection is being carried out in accordance with the provisions of the advertisement and an Expert Panel was duly constituted by the Commission and thereafter second Expert Panel has also reiterated that there is no error in the answer keys of the first Expert Committee.

14. I have heard learned counsel for the parties and perused the record.

15. The facts are not in dispute that the petitioners were fell short of 02 or 04 marks for gaining eligibility to appear in the main examination. The petitioners had filed objections against Question Nos.1, 13, 73, 79, 94 and 99 and after examining their objections by two members of the Expert Panel along with reference material, the Commission released the revised answer keys and on the basis of said revised keys, the cut-offs were announced on 09.01.2026 and the result was announced on 10.01.2026. This Court, after due deliberations and in order to balance the equity, referred the suspicious questions to the Panjab University with a request to constitute a panel of three subject experts to examine the same and the said Committee has categorically upheld the answer keys (with reference material) as set out by the Expert Panel constituted by the Commission after examining the objections raised by the petitioners.

16. Similar question has been considered by a Division Bench of this Court in *CWP No.11695 of 2023 titled as 'Navdeep Kaur v. State of Punjab and others', decided on 01.06.2023* and other connected cases, wherein the prayer was made for quashing the final answer key in respect of various sets/codes of question papers of preliminary examination of the Punjab Civil Services (Judicial Branch), which was held in pursuance to the advertisement dated 06.09.2022, and after considering judgments of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in *Kanpur University, through Vice Chancellor and others v. Samir Gupta and others : 1983(4) SCC 309*; *Ran Vijay Singh and others v. State of U.P. and others : (2018) 2 SCC 357*; *H.P. Public Service Commission v. Mukesh Thakur and others : 2010 (6) SCC 759*; *U.P.P.S.C. and others v. Rahul Singh and others : 2018 AIR (Supreme Court) 2861*; *Haryana Public Service Commission v. State of Haryana and others, Civil Appeal No.7727 of 2019 (arising out of SLP (C) No.30800 of 2018)*; *High Court of Tripura through Registrar General v. Tirtha Sarathi Mukherjee and others : 2019(2) SCT 117* and a Division Bench judgment of this Court in *CWP No.698 of 2022 titled as 'Penaaz Dhillon v. State of Haryana and others', decided on 14.01.2022*, it was held as under:-

“24. It is a settled position of law that judicial restraint is always to be exercised qua interference with answer keys provided by Expert Committees in exercise of jurisdiction under Article 226 of the Constitution of India. The Hon’ble Supreme Court in Kanpur University, through Vice Chancellor and others Vs. Samir Gupta and others, 1983(4) SCC 309, has observed as under:-

“16..... We agree that the key-answer should be assumed to be correct unless it is proved to be wrong and that it should not be held to be wrong by an inferential process of reasoning or by a process of rationalisation. It must be clearly demonstrated to

be wrong, that is to say, it must be such as no reasonable body of men well-versed in the particular subject would regard as correct.....”

25. *The Hon’ble Supreme Court in case of **Ran Vijay Singh and others Vs. State of U.P and others (2018) 2 SCC 357**, while dealing with the question of revaluation or scrutiny of answer sheets held as under:-*

“30. The law on the subject is therefore, quite clear and we only propose to highlight a few significant conclusions. They are:

(i) If a statute, Rule or Regulation governing an examination permits the re-evaluation of an answer sheet or scrutiny of an answer sheet as a matter of right, then the authority conducting the examination may permit it;

(ii) If a statute, Rule or Regulation governing an examination does not permit re-evaluation or scrutiny of an answer sheet (as distinct from prohibiting it) then the Court may permit re-evaluation or scrutiny only if it is demonstrated very clearly, without any “inferential process of reasoning or by a process of rationalisation” and only in rare or exceptional cases that a material error has been committed;

(iii) The Court should not at all re-evaluate or scrutinize the answer sheets of a candidate – it has no Expertise in the matter and academic matters are best left to academics; (iv) The Court should presume the correctness of the key answers and proceed on that assumption; and

(v) In the event of a doubt, the benefit should go to the examination authority rather than to the candidate.”

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31. *On our part we may add that sympathy or compassion does not play any role in the matter of directing or not directing re-evaluation of an answer sheet. If an error is committed by the examination authority, the complete body of candidates suffers. The entire examination process does not deserve to be derailed only because some candidates are disappointed or dissatisfied or perceive some injustice having been caused to them by an erroneous question or an erroneous answer. All candidates suffer equally, though some might suffer more but that cannot be helped since*

mathematical precision is not always possible. This Court has shown one way out of an impasse – exclude the suspect or offending question.

32. It is rather unfortunate that despite several decisions of this Court, some of which have been discussed above, there is interference by the Courts in the result of examinations. This places the examination authorities in an unenviable position where they are under scrutiny and not the candidates. Additionally, a massive and sometimes prolonged examination exercise concludes with an air of uncertainty. While there is no doubt that candidates put in a tremendous effort in preparing for an examination, it must not be forgotten that even the examination authorities put in equally great efforts to successfully conduct an examination. The enormity of the task might reveal some lapse at a later stage, but the Court must consider the internal checks and balances put in place by the examination authorities before interfering with the efforts put in by the candidates who have successfully participated in the examination and the examination authorities. The present appeals are a classic example of the consequence of such interference where there is no finality to the result of the examinations even after a lapse of eight years. Apart from the examination authorities even the candidates are left wondering about the certainty or otherwise of the result of the examination – whether they have passed or not; whether their result will be approved or disapproved by the Court; whether they will get admission in a college or University or not; and whether they will get recruited or not. This unsatisfactory situation does not work to anybody's advantage and such a state of uncertainty results in confusion being worse confounded. The overall and larger impact of all this is that public interest suffers.”

*26. Insofar as the argument that this Court not being an alien to the subject of law, should examine the objections raised as in appeal, is devoid of any merit, hence rejected. In this respect gainful reference can be made to a Division Bench Judgment of this High Court in **CWP No. 698 of 2022, decided on 14.01.2022, titled as Penaaz Dhillon Vs. State of Haryana and others**, wherein challenge was to the result of preliminary examination of the HCS (Judicial Branch) Examination 2020-21 for the post of Civil Judge (Jr. Division). Challenge had been raised to the answer key in the said case. While referring to judgment of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in **H.P. Public Service Commission Vs. Mukesh Thakur and others, 2010 (6)***

SCC 759, it was held that merely because the subject happens to be law, the Court would not arrogate to itself the powers of the Expert Committee.

27. The Hon'ble Supreme Court while reiterating and reaffirming its earlier decisions, held as under in ***U.P.P.S.C and others Vs. Rahul Singh and others, 2018 AIR (Supreme Court) 2861:-***

“12. The law is well settled that the onus is on the candidate to not only demonstrate that the key answer is incorrect but also that it is a glaring mistake which is totally apparent and no inferential process or reasoning is required to show that the key answer is wrong. The Constitutional Courts must exercise great restraint in such matters and should be reluctant to entertain a plea challenging the correctness of the key answers.”

28. Details of objections raised by the petitioners, their consideration by the Expert Panel and their evaluation by the learned Recruitment Committee has been reproduced in the foregoing paras. We have also gone through the Original Report of the Expert Panel produced before us. Learned counsel for the petitioners had referred to the judgments, which have admittedly been considered by the Expert Panel as well as the learned Recruitment Committee. Having considered the recommendation of the Expert Committee as further considered, deliberated and decided by the learned Recruitment Committee, details of which as supplied to us and as have been reproduced in the foregoing paras, we find no glaring mistake or opinion which is unreasonable, calling for interference in exercise of jurisdiction under Article 226 of the Constitution of India. In the given factual matrix, we do not consider it necessary or appropriate to render a further detailed discussion on each and every individual question.

29. We do not find any such glaring discrepancy in the matter which calls for the matter being referred to another Expert Committee. Routine constitution of such Expert Committee/s has been deprecated by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in ***Haryana Public Service Commission Vs. State of Haryana and others, Civil Appeal No. 7727 of 2019 (arising out of SLP (C) No. 30800 of 2018)***. In the said case, Haryana Public Service Commission, had undertaken the selection process to appoint 133 Assistant Professors of Geography (College), for which an objective type question paper was set up wherein candidates were required to answer 100 questions. It was contended before the learned Single Judge that out of 100 questions, most of them are either ambiguous or without correct answer key. Expert Committee was constituted, which on going through the question paper in detail gave its opinion

regarding seven questions. Learned Single Judge on going through the question paper concluded that four more questions were ambiguous, therefore should be deleted from consideration. Division Bench in appeal against the decision of the learned Single Judge, while holding that it was not for the learned Single Judge to carry out the exercise of an expert, passed orders for appointing another Expert Committee, which was subject matter of challenge before the Hon'ble Supreme Court in **Haryana Public Service Commission's case** (Supra). The Hon'ble Supreme Court held that if judgment of Division Bench is allowed to stand, there would be no finality to the selection process and especially keeping in view the fact that there was no allegation as such against the Expert Committee, who in its wisdom had submitted its report.

30. We must note at this stage that much stress had been laid on the fact that deletion of question no.1 is unfair on the premise that the Expert Panel had recommended change of answer to question no.1 from option D to C and the same was accepted by the learned Recruitment Committee at the first instance on 13.02.2023. Therefore, deletion of question no.1 was incorrectly directed by the learned Recruitment Committee at a subsequent stage, working to the detriment of a number of candidates, who would otherwise have been eligible to take the Mains examination, having answered the said question correctly. However, we find no merit in this argument in view of the discussion in the foregoing paras. We further reiterate that having perused meeting note dated 17.02.2023 of the learned Recruitment Committee we find that decision to delete Question no.1 was a well deliberated process after taking note of 35 cross-objections which were received against the proposed answer key to question no.1. It is reiterated that we have deliberately not entered the realm of discussion on the individual questions as in terms of the arguments as raised before us for the reason that we do not find the opinion and the recommendation of the Expert Panel and the decision taken by the learned Recruitment Committee to be discrepant or unreasonable which calls for any interference. As has been held by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in case of **Ran Vijay Singh (Supra)**, in the event of doubt, benefit necessarily has to be given to the examination authority rather than the candidate and exclusion of an offending question has been found to be correct way out.

31. The Hon'ble Supreme Court in **High Court of Tripura through Registrar General Vs. Tirtha Sarathi Mukherjee and others, 2019 (2) SCT 117**, held that the right to seek a writ of mandamus is based on the existence of a legal right and corresponding duty with the answering respondent to carry out public duty. In the absence of any provision, the

writ Court, it is held would exercise its powers only in a situation which is rare and exceptional. No such exceptional circumstance has been pointed out in these writ petitions.

32. It is pertinent to note that there is no allegation whatsoever against the Expert Panel or the learned Recruitment Committee. In-fact, learned counsel for the petitioners have been at pains to express that there is categorically no allegation or any mala fide alleged either against the Expert Panel or learned Recruitment Committee and that they would point out only the discrepancies on the basis of which they seek relief.”

17. In the present case also, there is no allegation against the Expert Panel which was firstly formed by the Commission and thereafter, the second Expert Panel was formed by the Panjab University in pursuance to the directions issued by this Court, vide order dated 07.03.2026. To the similar effect is the judgment of the Division Bench of this Court in ***Balraj Singh v. State of Haryana and others : 2025 NCPHHC 69684***, wherein also it has been held that the Court should exercise great restraint in such matters and should be reluctant to entertain a plea challenging the correctness of answer keys. Recently, a Coordinate Bench of this Court has also discussed the similar issue in ***Pratima Yadav and others v. State of Haryana and others : 2025 NCPHHC 139202***, wherein also, a writ of certiorari was sought for quashing the final answer key (revised) released by the respondent-Commission, pertaining to screening test for the post of Assistant Professor (College Cadre) Hindi against advertisement dated 02.08.2024, to the extent answers of 13 disputed questions were involved. In the said case also, the said 13 disputed questions were examined by the two Expert Committees and after considering the whole issue, it has been held as under:-

“5. It is apparent from the facts enumerated above that

after conduct of Screening Test for the post in question on 10.08.2025, the Commission invited objections to the answer key which was uploaded on 11.08.2025. The objections received were duly considered by a panel of two subject experts who held senior academic positions in two different universities, and the final answer key was published/uploaded based upon their advice on 23.08.2025. Since the candidates were still not satisfied and had been persisting with their representations/objections, the Commission decided to take second opinion of the experts on the objections, and the same were sent to the subject experts again. This time the panel consisted of three experts; apart from the two who were originally there, a third one was also included. The objections were again examined and based upon experts' advice, the impugned revised answer key was uploaded on 08.09.2025, deleting two more questions.

6. This Court finds no reason to differ with the view taken by the subject experts after examining their reports, as there is no mala fide alleged or arbitrariness noticed in the entire exercise. Their recommendations are based upon reasons. The Commission has acted in a reasonable and fair manner in sending the objections to the subject experts, and declaring final answer key as well as the result only as per their recommendations. This Court finds no justifiable or compelling reason to go into the validity of some of the answers disputed by learned counsel for the petitioner(s) on the basis of extracts of certain books appended to the petition; nor does it possess the domain knowledge to undertake the exercise. Also, there is no reason to doubt the advice of senior academicians, having expertise in the subject, who have examined the objections. Accordingly, no exception can be taken to the procedure followed by the Commission in declaring/revising the answer key for the Test.”

18. The judgments cited by the learned counsel for the petitioners in the present case i.e. **Kanpur University's case (supra)** and **Siddhi Sandeep Ladda's case (supra)** were considered and distinguished in **Pratima Yadav's case (supra)**, wherein claim of the petitioner (therein) was rejected and the writ petition was dismissed and it has been held as under:-

“7. The judgments referred to by learned counsel for the petitioner(s) have no application to the facts of the instant case. In Kanpur University case (supra), the Supreme Court has observed that, ‘the key answer should be

assumed to be correct unless it is proved to be wrong and that it should not be held to be wrong by an inferential process of reasoning or by a process of rationalisation. It must be clearly demonstrated to be wrong, that is to say, it must be such as no reasonable body of men well-versed in the particular subject would regard as correct. The contention of the University is falsified in this case by a large number of acknowledged text-books, which are commonly read by students in U.P. Those text-books leave no room for doubt that the answer given by the students is correct and the key answer is incorrect'. Such a situation does not arise in the instant case; rather, the body of experts well versed with the subject has already opined twice over that the answers are correct. Besides, the books referred to by learned counsel for the petitioner(s) are not shown to be the acknowledged text books. Also, the information/facts mentioned therein which have been relied upon by the petitioners are not annotated, disclosing its source. This information, on being juxtaposed with the advice of subject experts, who are senior academicians, loses significance in the context of deciding the issue at hand. Therefore, the Court is inclined to go with the advice offered.

7.1. The other judgment relied upon by learned counsel for the petitioner(s) in Siddhi Sandeep Ladda case (supra) is also besides the point, as the Supreme Court therein interfered in the matter on finding that the academicians themselves acted in a manner adversely affecting career aspirations of lakhs of students. Such a situation does not even remotely arise in the instant case; nor is there any allegation so far as conduct of the experts' body is concerned.

8. Besides, the view taken by this Court is similar to the one taken in CWP No.17356 of 2025 titled Anshu v. State of Haryana and others, which has been upheld by the Division Bench in LPA No.2392 of 2025, vide judgment dated 29.08.2025, by referring to observations by the Supreme Court in Ran Vijay Singh and others v. State of Uttar Pradesh and others, (2018) 2 SCC 357, which are as under:

31. On our part we may add that sympathy or compassion does not play any role in the matter of directing or not directing re-evaluation of an answer sheet. If an error is committed by the examination authority, the complete body of candidates suffers. The entire examination process does not deserve to be derailed only because some candidates are disappointed or dissatisfied or perceive some injustice having been caused to them by an erroneous question or an erroneous answer. All candidates suffer equally, though some might

suffer more but that cannot be helped since mathematical precision is not always possible. This Court has shown one way out of an impasse—exclude the suspect or offending question.

xxx xxx xxx xxx xxx”

19. To the similar effect is a recent judgment of this Court in ***CWP No.748 of 2018 titled as Paramjeet Kaur and another v. State of Punjab and another, decided on 03.12.2024.***

20. So far as the contention raised by the learned counsel for the petitioners qua deletion of at least 40% qualifying marks in Paper-II (CSAT) by granting 10 marks in that exam is concerned, the same assertion cannot be countenanced with as 10 additional marks for four wrong questions (4 x 2.5 marks) have been awarded to each candidate by the Commission. The said exercise has been done strictly in accordance with para 2 of the public notice dated 08.12.2025, published by the Commission which reads as under:-

*“2. Candidates are being given **four days** to deliberate and submit the objections. The objections will be referred to a body of experts. The issue may need to be referred to the paper setter also, for review. A decision is taken by the Commission based on all the opinions. The Commission may change the answer or allow more than one answer if recommended by the experts or withdraw the question altogether, based on the rationale given by the experts and Commission's decision thereon. In case, a question is withdrawn, all candidates will be given two (02) marks in Paper-1 (General Studies) and two and half (2.5) marks in Paper-2 (CSAT) irrespective of the fact whether the question has been attempted or not attempted by the candidate.”*

21. The other judgments cited by the learned counsel for the petitioners are also not applicable to the peculiar facts and circumstances of the case and will not give any weightage to the case of the petitioners as the matter has already been considered by the two Expert Committees.

22. Keeping in view the above, the factual matrix and the settled law, this Court is of the opinion that the present writ petition filed by the petitioners has no merit, which deserves to be and is dismissed accordingly.

CWP-2011-2026

23. Vide order dated 07.03.2026 passed in the main petition bearing CWP No.1950 of 2026 (Karanbeer Singh and others Vs. State of Punjab and others) and other connected matters, on the joint request of learned counsel for the parties, disputed Questions No.1, 13, 73, 79, 94 & 99 were sent to the Vice Chancellor, Panjab University, Chandigarh for examining the same by a Experts Panel and in response thereto, they have affirmed the answers given by the First Experts Panel constituted by the Commission.

24. Today, learned counsel for the petitioner in CWP-2011-2026 has pointed out that his petition pertains to the different questions i.e. Question Nos.21, 29 & 61, whereas he was required to point out the same on 07.03.2026, the date on which the bunch petitions including his case had been taken up and the matter was referred to the Panjab University. If not so was the position, he was required to brought this aspect, immediately after the order dated 07.03.2026 was uploaded on the website of this Court i.e. on 09.03.2026. Now, at this stage, i.e. after passing of a period of twenty days, this Court is not in a position to do anything as the Main Examination for the posts of PCS (Executive Branch) and other allied posts is scheduled for 01.04.2026 to 10.04.2026. Further, the questions qua which learned counsel for the petitioner(s) has raised concern, have already been considered by the

Subject Experts constituted by the Commission after examining the objections raised by the candidates. Moreover, in academic matters the scope of judicial interference is also very limited. Therefore, this Court is not inclined to invoke its jurisdiction under Article 226/227 of the Constitution of India in the present case.

25. Consequently, the petition is dismissed.

CWP-9173-2026

26. The petitioner has filed the instant petition on 23.03.2026 with the grievance that he has not been shortlisted for the Main Examination on account of certain wrong, vague/ambiguous questions i.e. Questions No.21, 33, 93, 99 & 14.

27. Concededly, the revised answer keys were released on 06.01.2026 and the Preliminary Examination result was, thereafter, declared on 10.01.2026, whereas the petitioner has approached this Court after an inordinate and unexplained delay of more than two months when the Main Examination is already scheduled to be held on 01.04.2026 to 10.04.2026. The other candidates have approached this Court well in time by filing various petitions such as CWP-1950-2026 (Karanbeer Singh and others Vs. State of Punjab and others) and other connected cases, wherein the similar issue was involved with regard to the wrong/vague/ambiguous questions given in the Preliminary Examination and this Court sent the matter to the Vice Chancellor, Panjab University, Chandigarh for re-checking of the same. A person who is sitting numb and approached the Court at a belated stage is not entitled to invoke extraordinary writ jurisdiction of this Court. The precise claim of the petitioner at this belated stage cannot be

adjudicated upon in terms of the facts and circumstances as narrated above and, therefore, the instant petition is dismissed accordingly.

28. All the other writ petitions also stand dismissed.
29. Pending applications, if any, stand disposed of.

27.03.2026

(NAMIT KUMAR)

Vinay

JUDGE

Whether speaking/reasoned : Yes/No

Whether reportable : Yes/No