



IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB & HARYANA
AT CHANDIGARH

CWP-4817-2026

AlizaPetitioner

Versus

State of Punjab and anotherRespondents

1.	The date when the judgment is reserved	24.03.2026
2.	The date when the judgment is pronounced	27.03.2026
3.	The date when the judgment is uploaded on	27.03.2026
4.	Whether only operative part of the judgment is pronounced or full judgment is pronounced	Full
5.	The delay, if any, of the pronouncement of full judgment, and reasons thereof.	Not applicable

CORAM: HON’BLE MR. JUSTICE NAMIT KUMAR

Argued by : Mr. Yagyadeep, Advocate and
Mr. Jaskirat Singh Dhaliwal, Advocate for the petitioner.

Mr. Swapan Shorey, D.A.G., Punjab.

NAMIT KUMAR, J.

1. The petitioner has filed the instant writ petition under Article 226 of the Constitution of India, seeking issuance of a writ of certiorari for quashing the result dated 10.01.2026 (Annexure P-5) of the Preliminary Examination qua the petitioner. Further, seeking issuance of a writ of mandamus directing respondent No.2 to revise the result of the Preliminary Examination by granting 92 marks in total (86 marks for 43 correct answers and 06 marks for 03 deleted questions) to the petitioner as per the Revised/Final Answer Key dated 06.01.2026 (Annexure P-3) and as per Public Notice dated 09.01.2026

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(Annexure P-6) and further, to allow the petitioner to appear in the Main Examination as the cut-off for the BC (Women) category is 88 marks.

2. The brief facts, as have been pleaded in the present petition, are that the Punjab Public Service Commission (hereinafter referred to as 'Commission'), vide Advertisement No.20251 dated 02.01.2025 (Annexure P-1), invited applications for filling up 322 posts of PCS (Executive Branch) and other allied services. Out of total advertised posts, 14 posts were reserved for the Backward Classes (Women) category. Being fully eligible, the petitioner applied for the abovesaid post by submitting the online application form under the BC (Women) category. Subsequently, she appeared in the Preliminary Examination, held on 07.12.2025. On 08.12.2025, the question papers and answer keys for all sets were uploaded on the official website of the Commission and objections to the Answer Keys were invited from the candidates. Since the petitioner could not find any wrong questions, she did not submit any objections. Thereafter, on 06.01.2026, the Commission uploaded the final/revised answer key (Annexure P-3) on its official website. Upon comparing the final answer key with her OMR sheet and the question paper, the petitioner found that she had correctly answered 43 questions and had secured 86 marks out of a total of 200 marks in Paper-I (General Studies). Subsequently, the Commission issued a Public Notice dated 09.01.2026 (Annexure P-4), stating therein that pursuant to the queries/objections received from the various candidates, the Commission revised the answer key and further, it has been decided to delete 04 questions (question Nos.25, 65, 80 & 95) of

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Paper-I (General Studies) and further, 02 marks of each deleted question were awarded to all the candidates. On 10.01.2026, the Commission uploaded the complete Result Gazette (Annexure P-5) of the Preliminary Examination, wherein it has been shown that the petitioner scored 86 marks in Paper-I (General Studies) and 122.50 marks in Paper-II (Civil Services Aptitude Test). As per the final/revised answer key, the petitioner counted her correct answers as 43, i.e. 86 marks (including Question No.65, which has been deleted by respondent No.2 and for which 2 marks were awarded to all the candidates). However, the Commission has not granted 06 marks for the remaining 03 deleted questions (Question Nos.25, 80 & 95) in the final result of the petitioner. If the said 06 marks are granted, the total marks of the petitioner would increase to 92, thereby making her eligible to appear in the Main Examination, as the cut off marks for the BC (Women) Category is 88 marks. Upon noticing anomaly in her result, she sent a representation dated 10.01.2026 (Annexure P-7) through e-mail to respondent No.2 explaining the entire controversy with a prayer that she be granted 06 marks for the 03 deleted questions, which would raise her total to 92 marks and render her eligible to appear in the Main Examination. In response thereto, the Commission sent a reply dated 03.02.2026 (Annexure P-8), through e-mail to the petitioner stating therein that the Commission has re-checked her answer sheet and they did not find any error in the evaluation done. Hence, the instant petition.

3. Short reply by way of an affidavit of Sh. Vyom Bharadvaj, PCS, Secretary Examinations, Punjab Public Service Commission,



Patiala, Punjab, on behalf of respondent No.2 has been filed, wherein it has been stated as under :-

“xx xx xx xx xx

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 and Paper-II i.e. CSAT 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 R-1), 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 received at Commission office. Afterwards, objection received from the candidates, regarding the Answer Key, were referred to subject experts for advice/opinion. 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-2) regarding Paper-I i.e. General Studies and Paper-II i.e. CSAT on Commission's website.

7. *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 in accordance with the excerpt mentioned in Para No. 2 of the Commission's Public Notice dated 08.12.2025 (Annexure R-1), which is mentioned hereinafter for the kind perusal of this Hon'ble Court:*

" 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."

8. *That it is also noteworthy to mention here that following the representation dated 10.01.2026 (Annexure P-7) submitted by the petitioner, Commission office, as per request of the petitioner, carefully re-checked her answer sheet and found that there is no error in the evaluation done by PPSC. Thereafter, intimation regarding the same has also been provided to the petitioner via email dated 03.02.2026 (Annexure P-8), whereby, it is also clarified that the marks mentioned in the result gazette are absolutely correct and final. Thus, all the contentions of the petitioner are baseless and devoid of merits as petitioner has been awarded equal marks in lieu of the cancelled questions and her final score in the result gazette is completely accurate. PPSC conducted the entire process as per the instructions of the Government and rules provided by the concerned department in this regard, and no discrimination has been done to any candidate at any stage. Hence, PPSC has acted under the ambit of law and there is no violation with regard to any provision of law.*

xx xx xx xx xx”



4. Learned counsel for the petitioner has argued that as per the revised/final answer key uploaded by the Commission, the petitioner had correctly answered 43 questions and had secured 86 marks in Paper-I (General Studies) and if she is granted 06 marks for 03 deleted questions (question Nos.25, 80 & 95), then she would get 92 marks in total and would be shortlisted to appear in the Main Examination as the cut-off for Preliminary Examination is 88 marks for the BC (Women) category. He further submits that either respondent No.2 has committed an error in checking the OMR sheet of the petitioner or they have committed an error while preparing the final result as the petitioner should have got 92 marks in total (86 marks for 43 correct answers and 06 marks for 03 deleted questions). However, she has been granted only 86 marks.

5. Per contra, learned State counsel, while referring to the averments made in the reply filed by respondent No.2-Commission, has argued that 86 marks awarded to the petitioner in Paper-I (General Studies) are absolutely correct and final and therefore, the instant petition deserves to be dismissed.

6. I have heard learned counsel for the parties and perused the relevant documents.

7. Admittedly, the Commission, vide Advertisement No.20251 dated 02.01.2025 (Annexure P-1) invited applications for filling up 322 posts (including 14 posts for BC (Women) category) of PCS (Executive Branch) and other allied services. The petitioner, being fully eligible, applied for the ibid post and subsequently appeared in the

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Preliminary Examination held on 07.12.2025. Thereafter, the Commission issued a Public Notice dated 09.01.2026 (Annexure P-4), stating therein that pursuant to the queries/objections received from the candidates, the answer key had been revised and it was decided to delete 04 questions (Question Nos.25, 65, 80 & 95) of Paper-I (General Studies), and to give 02 marks for each deleted questions to all the candidates. Thereafter, respondent No.2 uploaded the complete Result Gazette dated 10.01.2026 (Annexure P-5) of the Preliminary Examination, wherein it has been shown that the petitioner scored 86 marks in Paper-I (General Studies) and 122.50 marks in Paper-II (Civil Services Aptitude Test).

8. The case of the petitioner is that as per the final/revised answer key, she calculated her correct answers as 43 i.e. 86 marks (including Question No.65 which had been deleted by the Commission and for which 2 marks were awarded to all the candidates). However, the Commission has failed to award 06 marks for the remaining three deleted questions in the final result of the petitioner, and if the said 06 marks are duly granted to the petitioner, her total score would increase to 92 marks and she would consequently be shortlisted to appear in the Main Examination, as the cut-off marks prescribed for the BC (Women) category is 88 marks.

9. In its reply, the Commission has stated that after conducting the Preliminary Examination, the Commission uploaded the answer keys on its official website on 08.12.2025 and vide public notice of the same date, the candidates were given four days time, i.e. from

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08.12.2025 to 12.12.2025, to submit their objections, if any, to the answer keys. In response to the said notice, various objections were received from the candidates, regarding the answer keys uploaded by the Commission and the said objections were referred to the subject experts for their advice/opinion. After obtaining advice/opinion from the subject experts, 04 questions (Question Nos.25, 65, 80 & 95) of Paper-1 (General Studies) were deleted and it was decided that 02 marks of each deleted question would be awarded to all candidates, irrespective of whether those questions had been attempted or not. Consequently, the Revised/Final Answer Key was prepared and published, vide Public Notice dated 09.01.2026, on the official website of the Commission.

10. As per the stand taken by the Commission in its reply, the whole recruitment process for the post of PCS (Executive Branch), undertaken in pursuance of the advertisement dated 02.01.2025, was conducted as per the instructions of the Government and rules provided by the concerned department in this regard and no discrimination was meted out to any candidate at any stage of the process.

11. Further, following the representation dated 10.01.2026 (Annexure P-7) submitted by the petitioner, the Commission has carefully re-checked her answer sheet and found that there is no error in the evaluation done by the Commission. Thereafter, intimation regarding the same has also been provided to the petitioner vide email dated 03.02.2026 (Annexure P-8), whereby, it is also clarified that the marks mentioned in the result gazette are absolutely correct and final.



12. Once the answer sheet of the petitioner has been thoroughly re-checked by the Commission and no discrepancy has been found in the evaluation of marks, and it has been duly communicated to the petitioner that her marks mentioned in the result gazette are absolutely correct and final, nothing survives for adjudication in the present petition.

13. In view of the above, no ground is made out for interference by this Court in the facts and circumstances of the present case. Accordingly, the instant petition is dismissed with no order as to cost.

27.03.2026
Kothiyal

(NAMIT KUMAR)
JUDGE

Whether Speaking/reasoned	Yes/No
Whether Reportable	Yes/No