

IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB & HARYANA
AT CHANDIGARH

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Date of decision: April 23, 2026

(1) CWP-4935-2026

ANAND CHAHAL AND OTHERS

...Petitioners

Versus

STATE OF HARYANA AND OTHERS

...Respondents

(2) CWP-7940-2026

ANSHUL RANI AND OTHERS

... Petitioners

Versus

STATE OF HARYANA AND OTHERS

...Respondents

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE TRIBHUVAN DAHIYA

Present: Mr. Mandeep Singh Lamba, Advocate;
Mr. Jasbir Mor, Advocate
for the petitioner(s).

Mr. Aakash Singla, Additional Advocate General, Haryana.

Mr. Kanwal Goyal, Advocate with
Ms. Sheena Dahiya, Advocate and
Ms. Komal Klana, Advocate;
Mr. Gurnoor Singh Sandhu, Advocate
for the respondent(s)/HPSC.

TRIBHUVAN DAHIYA, J. (ORAL)

These petitions have been filed seeking quashing of final answer key of Screening Test dated 06.08.2025, for the post of Assistant Professor (History) against advertisement 53/2024; and a direction to decide the petitioners' objections to certain questions, declare the final result and consider them for appointment against the posts since they have already cleared the Subject Knowledge Test as well as interview, for which they were provisionally

allowed to appear in the earlier round of litigation challenging the first answer key and result of the Screening Test dated 03.06.2025.

2. Learned counsel for the petitioners contended that in the earlier round of litigation, the petitioners were granted liberty to challenge the revised result of Screening Test dated 06.08.2025, vide orders dated 19.11.2025 and 11.02.2026, passed by this Court in CWP-21304-2025 and CWP-4095-2026 respectively. Their objections to the final answer key of Screening Test have not been properly considered, and therefore the result deserves to be quashed. They further contend that petitioner no.2 (in CWP-4935-2026) as well as petitioners no.2 and 5 (in CWP-7940-2026) are entitled to selection on the basis of their provisional results of the Subject Knowledge Test as well as interview, whereby they have secured more than the cut-off marks in their respective categories. The petitions *qua* rest of the petitioners do not survive since they scored below the cut-off.

3. Learned counsel for the Commission, however, contended that Screening Test for the post in question was conducted on 18.05.2025, and objections were invited from the candidates on the basis of provisional answer key on 19.05.2025. The same were considered by the subject experts and final answer key along with the result of the Test was uploaded on 03.06.2025. However, the Commission again received objections from the candidates regarding the answer key and cases were also filed before this Court in that regard. Only for maintaining transparency and fairness, the Commission again sent the objections of candidates, including those of the petitioners, for reconsideration to another committee of independent experts. As per the advice tendered, the final answer key was revised by deleting question no.50, and the

revised result was announced on 06.08.2025. The petitions were finally dismissed on 19.11.2025. However, on account of interim orders passed in the aforementioned petitions filed by the petitioners, they were allowed to provisionally appear for the Subject Knowledge Test that was conducted on 14.09.2025. Inadvertently, they were permitted to appear for the interview also conducted between 12 to 14.02.2026, though were not entitled to it after dismissal of their petitions vide order dated 19.11.2025. This is more so because they had not submitted any objection to the revised result of Screening Test by then. He further contended that on similar facts this Court has already decided the issue against the petitioners in CWP-4095-2026 titled *Ritika Deshwal and others v. State of Haryana and others*, vide order dated 11.02.2026.

4. Submissions made by learned counsel for the parties have been considered.

5. The petitioners were given liberty to challenge the revised result of Screening Test dated 06.08.2025, and vide representation dated 19.12.2025, Annexure P-22, they again raised objections to questions no. 5, 6, 14, 27, 39, 44, 46, 49, 50, 51, 54, 56, 59, 66, 67, 75, 76, 84, 87 and 96. These questions were objected to by them earlier too as has been averred in para 22 of the petition itself. It is also a conceded position on record that these objections have been considered by the experts twice, firstly prior to declaration of the result of Screening Test dated 03.06.2025, and secondly before declaring the revised result on 06.08.2025. Accordingly, there is no scope for entertaining any doubt about these questions. Also, the petitioners have not been shortlisted for the Subject Knowledge Test on the basis of marks obtained by them in the

Screening Test. As per the Scheme of Examination mentioned in the advertisement, only the candidates who have secured minimum twenty-five per cent marks and fall within four times the number of advertised posts on the basis of merit in the Screening Test, are required to be shortlisted for the next stage of selection - Subject Knowledge Test. The petitioners failed to make the mark in the Screening Test and could not have participated in the further selection process. Resultantly, they cannot be considered for selection on the basis of results of the Subject Knowledge Test and interview. Their failure to clear the first hurdle on merit - Screening Test, denuded them of the foundation to step on to the next stage of selection. It is a process that mandates clearance on merit at every step and no candidate can be allowed to leapfrog to the next step without qualifying the first one. The issue has already been considered by this Court in *Ritika Deshwal* case *ibid.*, holding as under:

5. Considering the submissions, this Court is not inclined to entertain the petition. Undisputedly, the petitioners' participation in the Subject Knowledge Test was as an interim measure pending decision of their earlier petitions which were finally decided vide order dated 19.11.2025, as the Screening Test result under challenge had been revised. None of them could clear the test as per the revised result dated 06.08.2025, which has not been challenged either. And unless the first stage-Screening Test is cleared, they cannot be permitted to appear for the second stage-Subject Knowledge Test. Merely because one of them has cleared the Subject Knowledge Test that cannot be a ground to permit her to appear for the interview, as the very basis for her participation in the second stage of selection no longer subsists.

6. In view thereof, finding no merit in the petitions, the same stand dismissed.
7. A photocopy of this order be placed on the file of the connected case.

April 23, 2026
Jaspreet Kaur

(TRIBHUVAN DAHIYA)
JUDGE

Whether speaking/reasoned : *Yes/No*

Whether reportable : *Yes/No*