

CWP-10164 of 2026

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

CWP-10164 of 2026

Date of decision: 06.04.2026

Pardeep Kaur

....Petitioner

versus

State of Punjab and another

....Respondents

CORAM : HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE NAMIT KUMAR

Present: Mr. Vivek Sharma, Advocate,
for the petitioner.

Mr. Surya Kumar, AAG, Punjab.

NAMIT KUMAR, J.

1. Instant writ petition has been filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India for issuance of a writ of certiorari for quashing the public notices dated 26.02.2026 (Annexure P-8) and 18.03.2026 (Annexure P-9), vide which the respondents have called the candidates for filling up separate application form for main examination. Further a writ of mandamus has been sought directing the respondents to allow the petitioner to take the main examination of the Punjab State Civil Services Combined Competitive Examination 2025 on the basis of the application form submitted initially or in the alternative the petitioner may be allowed to fill up the said form for the main examination of the Punjab State Civil Services Combined Competitive Examination 2025 by extending the last date.



2. Brief facts of the case, as have been pleaded in the petition, are that the petitioner, a graduate (B.A.) and B.Ed. degree holder, applied for PSCSCC examination pursuant to the advertisement dated 08.01.2025 (Annexure P-1). The selection process comprised a preliminary examination followed by main examination and interview. The petitioner applied under sports category and appeared in preliminary examination conducted on 07.12.2025, and was declared qualified for the main examination. However, subsequently, the respondents issued public notices dated 26.02.2026 (Annexure P-8) and 18.03.2026 (Annexure P-9) requiring candidates to submit a separate application form for the main examination. The last date to submit the application form was extended till 20.03.2026 (11:59 PM) and it was mentioned in the public notice that no further chance will be given in this regard.

The petitioner, being unaware of such requirement and having already submitted the initial application form, did not fill the separate form. Consequently, she was declared ineligible for the main examination. Aggrieved thereby, the petitioner submitted a representation dated 23.03.2026 (Annexure P-10), but no action was taken by the respondents. Hence, the present petition.

3. Learned counsel for the petitioner submitted that requiring submission of a separate form for the main examination, after issuance of the original advertisement, is arbitrary and contrary to the prescribed procedure. He further submitted that the petitioner, having qualified the



preliminary examination, could not have been declared ineligible on technical ground, especially when no proper or adequate intimation of the changed requirement was given.

4. *Per contra*, learned State counsel submitted that the requirement of filling a separate form for the main examination was duly notified through public notices. He further submitted that adherence to such conditions is mandatory, and since the petitioner failed to comply the same within the stipulated time, she has rightly been held ineligible.

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

6. The grievance raised by the petitioner in the present case is that despite having applied pursuant to the original advertisement and qualifying the preliminary examination, the petitioner has been declared ineligible for the main examination solely on the ground of not submitting a separate application form, which requirement was introduced subsequently through public notices (such condition is contrary to the original advertisement and was not properly communicated, resulting in arbitrary denial of her candidature for the main examination)

7. Similar issue has been dealt with by this Court in ***CWP-9380 of 2026 – Lt. CDR Navroop Kaur v. State of Punjab and another decided on 27.03.2026***, wherein it has been held as under: -



“1. Prayer in this petition filed under Articles 226/227 of the Constitution of India is for issuance of a writ in the nature of mandamus directing the respondents to permit the petitioner to submit her application form and to appear in the Punjab State Civil Services Combined Competitive (Mains) Examination, 2025, commencing from 01.04.2026.

2. On receipt of advance copy of the petition, Mr. Surya Kumar, AAG, Punjab, appears on behalf of respondents. He, on instructions from Ms. Pooja Verma, Senior Assistant, PPSC, submits that the portal was firstly opened vide public notice dated 26.02.2026, whereby the candidates were directed to fill their online application forms by 08.03.2026 upto 11:59 PM, failing which, they will not be able to download their admit cards for the Mains examination. Thereafter, the portal was again opened on 09.03.2026 and the candidates were given further time till 11.03.2026 upto 11:59 PM. Thereafter, again on 18.03.2026, the portal was opened and the candidates were directed to fill their online application forms by 20.03.2026 upto 11:59 PM. He further submits that it is the case of the petitioner herself that she received a whatsapp message from the Commission on 18.03.2026, wherein it was stated “Dear candidate, You have still not filled PCS Mains-2025 application form. Last date to submit is 20.03.2026. Ensure to submit the form after saving the draft as per instructions dated 26.02.2026 uploaded on website of Commission. Regards PPSC”, and still the petitioner has not submitted her application form for the main examination.

3. It is a well settled proposition of law that the cut-off dates prescribed for submission of application forms in competitive examinations are sacrosanct and must be



adhered to strictly. Such timelines are not mere procedural formalities but are integral for maintaining certainty, transparency and uniformity in the selection process. Once a schedule is notified, it binds all candidates alike, and no individual can claim a special dispensation on account of negligence or personal difficulty. Permitting relaxation of the cut-off date in individual cases would not only amount to conferring undue advantage upon a negligent candidate but would also open the floodgates for similar claims. The sanctity of the selection process lies in strict adherence to the notified timelines, and any deviation therefrom would compromise the principles of fairness and equal opportunity enshrined under Articles 14 and 16 of the Constitution of India. Consequently, a candidate, who fails to comply with the stipulated schedule cannot, as a matter of right, seek indulgence of the Court to extend or reopen the process.

4. Accordingly, upon consideration of the submissions made and the material placed on record, this Court is of the considered view that the present petition is devoid of merit. It is not in dispute that the respondent-Commission, had granted multiple opportunities to the candidates, including the petitioner, to submit their online applications forms within the stipulated time. The portal, initially opened pursuant to public notice dated 26.02.2026, was thereafter reopened on more than one occasion, thereby extending sufficient opportunity to comply with requisite formalities. Despite such repeated extensions and explicit intimation, the petitioner failed to submit her application form within the prescribed time. The said conduct clearly reflects negligence and lack of due diligence on the part of the petitioner. Therefore, interference by this Court in such



circumstances would not only be unwarranted but would also disrupt the sanctity of selection process.

5. *In view of the foregoing reasons, no ground is made out for interference by this Court in the facts and circumstances of the present case.*

6. *Accordingly, the writ petition is dismissed with no order as to costs."*

8. Recently, the Hon'ble Supreme Court has considered similar issue in ***Civil Appeal No.4150 of 2026 – Commissioner, Delhi Police and another v. Uttam Kumar, decided on 02.04.2026 : 2026 INSC 314***, wherein it has been held as under: -

"3. Public employment is scarce. The youth of the country eagerly await such employment opportunities, as and when the same are thrown open, with fervent hopes for a brighter future. Here, we have a case where the respondent, despite having qualified in the first tier of the selection process for appointment as a Constable in the police force, has simply frittered away a golden opportunity by staying away from participating in the next tier of selection, i.e., the Physical Endurance and Measurement Test (PE&MT) citing ill health (suffering from cold, cough, fever, headache, body pain, and dizziness). Respondent should have been made to pay the price for his tardy and lethargic conduct; however, the successful invocation of jurisdiction by the Central Administrative Tribunal, Principal Bench, New Delhi in directing the appellants to allow the respondent to take the PE&MT with the next batch of job aspirants, followed by refusal of the High Court of Delhi to interfere resulting in approval of the Tribunal's aforesaid direction, has triggered this appeal.

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4. *The reason which weighed with the Tribunal and the High Court is that the respondent had submitted at least 3 (three) representations seeking rescheduling of the date for his PE&MT, which went unheeded.*

5. *The advertisement dated 1st September, 2023 pursuant to which the respondent applied for consideration of his candidature, in no uncertain terms, stipulated that the schedule for the PE&MT is final and cannot be altered under any circumstances. We are informed that a little less than a lakh of job aspirants had registered themselves for participation in the selection process; however, it was the respondent alone who sought for rescheduling of the date for the PE&MT.*

6. *The record reveals that the respondent was scheduled to appear for the PE&MT on 14th January, 2024. He sought to submit three representations dated 13th, 14th and 25th January, 2024. Prayer in the first two representations was common: either the respondent be advised to take the PE&MT on the reserve day or 15 (fifteen) days' time may be given to him to recover. Admittedly, the first representation "was not accepted by the concerned officer". It was, therefore, not looked into. Insofar as the second and the third representations are concerned, we find absence of any statement in the original application that the same were received by the office of the respective addressees. Our query as to who submitted the said representations went unanswered. There being no endorsement acknowledging receipt of the said representations, it makes the claim of the respondent that his representations were not considered doubtful.*

7. *Be that as it may, assuming that the representations were received and did deserve a look, there is a clear statement*

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in the third representation (dated 25th January, 2024) that "on the morning of 13th January, 2024 the applicant reported to the Delhi Police Recruitment 2023 for the Posts of Constable/Executive Male ...". By his own admission, the respondent was able to move around on 13th January, 2024 but unable to move on 14th January, 2024. Such being the position, at least, an effort should have been made by the respondent to remain physically present on the scheduled date of the PE&MT. He, however, abstained and was, in our opinion, rightly marked "ABSENT".

8. Even otherwise, notwithstanding that the representations were not answered, bearing in mind the clear stipulation in the advertisement, noted above, the request of the respondent could not have been favourably considered unless, of course, an exceptional case for its acceptance were set up. Nature of the respondent's ill health on the date he was scheduled to appear for the PE&MT (14th January, 2024) was not such so as to deserve an exceptional treatment. We, thus, see no reason to hold that the omission, neglect or failure of the appellants to even respond to the respondent's representations, assuming that they were received, conferred on him the enforceable right to seek a rescheduling of the examination date. Most certainly, non-communication of any decision on any of the representations, on facts and in the circumstances, did not clothe the Tribunal to make the order it did while disposing of the original application, throwing the process asunder.

9. The stakes are high, when it comes to public employment and opportunities like these can be life changing for young people. When chances are rare, one needs to grab them with both hands. The ailment from which the respondent was suffering was not such that he was even unable to

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move, and the minimum that one could expect of him was to report for the PE&MT, cite his inability to take the same and to request rescheduling to enable him participate. This could have, at least, given an opportunity to the appellants or the authorities in charge of holding the examination to decide whether or not the respondent was in genuine need for an accommodation. Not showing up and expecting a second chance, clearly demonstrates a lack of drive and initiative on the part of the respondent.

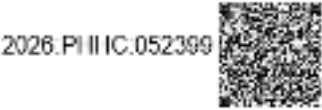
10. Given that the respondent aspired to join the police force as a Constable, his conduct leaves a lot to be desired.

11. We are also not persuaded to accept the argument that since the respondent belongs to the backward community, the Tribunal and the High Court were right in exercising discretion in his favour and against the appellants. Merely because one belongs to the backward community cannot be the decisive factor for tilting the scales. The boundaries for exercise of discretion are well carved out beyond which the adjudicatory fora ought not to trench. Grace, charity or compassion ought to stay at a distance in matters of public employment, if a fair level playing field is to be secured.

12. There is, thus, no other option before us but to set aside the judgment and order of the Tribunal dated 7th July, 2025, since upheld by the High Court vide the judgment and order dated 3rd September 2025 under challenge. It is ordered accordingly.

13. The appeal stands allowed.”

9. Keeping in view the above referred facts and circumstances of the case and settled position of law, this Court finds no merit in the claim of the petitioner. It is a settled proposition of law that the conditions governing a selection process, including those introduced



through duly notified public notices, are binding on all candidates and are required to be strictly adhered to. However, in the present case, the requirement of submitting a separate application form was specifically notified within the stipulated time. The petitioner, admittedly, failed to comply with the mandatory requirement. Merely qualifying the preliminary examination does not confer any vested right upon a candidate to participate in main examination, particularly in absence of compliance with the prescribed procedural conditions. Therefore, in such circumstances, the action of respondents cannot be termed as arbitrary, or violative of any statutory or constitutional provision. Consequently, no ground for interference is made out by this Court, therefore, the petition is hereby dismissed, with no order as to costs.

06.04.2026

R.S.

(NAMIT KUMAR)

JUDGE

Whether speaking/reasoned:	Yes/No
Whether Reportable:	Yes/No