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* **IN THE HIGH COURT OF DELHI AT NEW DELHI**

+ **W.P.(C) 1258/2025**

SONIA

.....Petitioner

Through: Mr. Punit and Mr. Nikhil, Advocates.
Mr. Satinder, proposed applicant in person.

versus

UNION OF INDIA AND ORS

.....Respondents

Through: Ms. Radhika Bishwajit Dubey CGSC,
Ms. Gurleen Kaur Waraich and Mr. Kritarth Upadhyay, Advocates.
Ms. Radhika Bishwajit Dubey, CGSC, Mr. Aakash Pathak, GP, Ms. Gurleen Kaur Waraich, Mr. Kritarth Upadhyay and Mr. Aayush Dogra, Advocates for R-1.
Mr. Anupam S Sharrma, Ms. Harpreet Kalsi, Mr. Ripudamn Sharma, Mr. Vashisht Rao, Ms. Riya Sachdeva and Ms. Amisha P Dash, Advs. for CBI
Mr. Siddharth Yadav, Mr. Rahul Sambher, Ms. Kashish Ahuja and Mr. Ayush Kr Singh, proposed respondents.
Insp. Rajesh Meena PS Palam Village.

CORAM:

HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE PURUSHAINDRA KUMAR KAURAV

ORDER

21.01.2026

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W.P.(C) 1258/2025

1. The instant petition is for the following reliefs:



a) Issue any appropriate writ, order or directions including a writ of mandamus thereby directing the Respondent No.1 /Union of India to forthwith appoint a Nodal Officer to coordinate information and developments pertaining to the murder of Indian Citizen Harshita Brella between the United Kingdom Police and the Petitioner; and

(b) Issue any appropriate writ, order or direction including a writ of mandamus thereby directing the Respondent No.1 /Union of India to forthwith take steps as may be mandated in law to ensure justice for the murder of Indian Citizen Harshita Brella between the United Kingdom Police and the Petitioner; and

(c) Issue any appropriate writ, order or direction including a writ of mandamus thereby directing the Respondent Nos. 2 and 3 to answer any outstanding requests (or expeditiously as and when the same may be received) from the United Kingdom Police or Interpol pertaining to the murder of Indian Citizen Harshita Brella; and

(d) Pass such other or further orders as this Hon'ble Court may deem just and proper in the facts and circumstances of the case; and"

2. The facts manifest that the petitioner is the sister of Ms. Harshita Brella, who was married to Mr. Pankaj Lamba on 22.03.2024 in accordance with Hindu rites and customs. Thereafter, on 30.04.2024, Harshita travelled to the United Kingdom to join her husband, who was residing there on a student visa. On 31.07.2024, Harshita for the first time informed the petitioner about frequent quarrelling and fighting with her husband, indicating marital discord soon after the marriage.

3. In the night intervening 28/29.08.2024, while in the United Kingdom, it is alleged that Pankaj Lamba assaulted Harshita and threatened to push her out of a window, from which she managed to escape. On the morning of 29.08.2024, Harshita approached the Northamptonshire Police Station and reported that she had been assaulted by her husband not only on the previous night but also on earlier occasions. The complaint was reviewed on 30.08.2024, whereupon the Domestic Abuse Investigation Unit (DAIU)



commenced an investigation. Harshita was placed by the local council in a hotel, thereafter moved to a refuge, and was supported by an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA). On 03.09.2024, Pankaj Lamba was arrested by the UK police and was subsequently released on bail subject to conditions, *inter alia* prohibiting contact with Harshita, such bail conditions being valid till 26.11.2024.

4. It is alleged by the petitioner that, thereafter, sustained pressure was exerted upon Harshita to withdraw the complaint. The sister of Pankaj Lamba contacted her and pressurised her to withdraw the complaint lodged with the UK police. On 16.09.2024, Harshita is stated to have succumbed to such pressure and withdrew her complaint before the UK police.

5. Between 11.11.2024 to 13.11.2024, Harshita became uncontactable by the petitioner and her family in India. Consequently, on 14.11.2024, a family friend of the petitioner in the UK lodged a missing person complaint. On 15.11.2024, the petitioner's father was informed by the local police in India that Interpol India had received a communication from Interpol, Manchester, regarding the death of Harshita. It was further informed that her body had been recovered on 14.11.2024 from the boot of a car in East London, United Kingdom.

6. The Northamptonshire Police in the UK named Harshita's husband, Pankaj Lamba, as the prime suspect in her murder and stated that an international manhunt had been launched for his apprehension. However, according to the Petitioner, no effective steps are being taken for his apprehension, despite reason to believe that he is presently in India. It is stated that the petitioner's family has also been denied access to information regarding the progress of the murder investigation being conducted in the



United Kingdom. In these circumstances, the present writ petition has been filed. The Court on 10.11.2025 issued notice and directed that a status report be placed on record.

7. The status report states that the dead body of Harshita was received in India on 01.12.2024. On 03.12.2024, a panel of doctors was constituted and the post-mortem examination was conducted, which opined that the cause of death was manual strangulation and that the death was homicidal in nature. It is also stated that pursuant thereto, FIR No. 705/2024 under Sections 498A/406/34 IPC was registered at Police Station Palam Village, Delhi, and an investigation was taken up.

8. During the course of investigation, the offence under Section 304 IPC (corresponding to Section 80 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023) was also added. The travel details of the husband of the Harshita, namely Pankaj Lamba, were obtained from the Foreigners Regional Registration Office (FRRO). It is further stated that various steps were taken to conclude the investigation. As the accused Pankaj Lamba was not cooperating, a Look Out Circular (LOC) was opened against him. After completion of the investigation, necessary steps were also initiated for proceeding under Section 188 of the Criminal Procedure Code, against the absconding accused, Pankaj Lamba.

9. Upon completion of the investigation, a charge sheet was filed against Darshan Singh, son of Basant Pal, and Ms. Sunil, wife of Darshan Singh. They were arrested during the course of the investigation and were subsequently granted bail by the Court of competent jurisdiction.

10. It is stated that there are six accused persons in total, including the husband of the Harshita. Except for the husband, Pankaj Lamba, all other



accused have been apprehended, and after completion of the investigation, the charge-sheet was filed on 10.06.2025. The trial is presently pending before the Court of competent jurisdiction. It is further stated that all efforts have been made by the investigating agency to apprehend the absconding accused, Pankaj Lamba.

11. Having considered the submissions made in the status report, the Court finds that the prayers made in the instant petition stand substantially satisfied.

12. So far as the submission of the learned counsel for the petitioner that the police is not making adequate efforts to apprehend the absconding accused is concerned, learned counsel for the Union of India, assures the Court that all possible efforts are being made, and further submits that if the petitioner is in possession of any information regarding the whereabouts of the absconding accused, the police shall act upon the same information forthwith. Thus, an assurance is accordingly given on behalf of the police that prompt action shall be taken.

13. In view thereof, liberty is granted to the petitioner to immediately furnish any relevant information to the Investigating Officer, who is present in Court and is directed to take prompt action without any delay.

14. It is clarified that if the petitioner has any other grievance, the same shall be subject to adjudication before the Court of competent jurisdiction during the course of trial. Petition stands disposed of.

PURUSHAINDR KUMAR KAURAV, J
JANUARY 21, 2026/JYH/mj