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* **IN THE HIGH COURT OF DELHI AT NEW DELHI**+ **W.P.(C) 5090/2026 & CM APPL. 24982/2026****UNION OF INDIA & ORS.**

.....Petitioners

Through: Mr. Satya Ranjan Swain, CGSC
with Mr Kautilya Birat, Advocate

versus

RAVI

.....Respondent

Through: Mr. Sachin Chauhan, Advocate

CORAM:**HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE C. HARI SHANKAR****HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE OM PRAKASH SHUKLA****ORDER (ORAL)**

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27.04.2026**C. HARI SHANKAR, J.**

1. The respondent applied for appointment as Junior Secretariat Assistant in the Ministry of Defence¹, consequent on an examination conducted by the Staff Selection Commission. The examination was conducted in three tiers followed by medical examination.

2. Consequent to the selection process being undertaken by the respondent, he was issued an offer of appointment by the MOD on 19 June 2020. However, subsequently, by order dated 16 September 2020, his candidature was cancelled, apparently on the ground that the petitioner apprehended that there had been impersonation of the respondent during the selection process. The specific allegation of the petitioner was that the person who had undertaken the Tier-1



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examination was not the person who had undertaken the Tier-2 and Tier-3 examination and presented himself for medical examination. As such, the discrepancy was between the person who attempted the Tier-1 examination and the person who attempted the Tier-2 and Tier-3 examinations. There is no dispute that Tier-2 and Tier-3 examinations, as well as the medical examination thereafter, were undergone by the respondent.

3. The dispute was, therefore, whether an impersonator had attempted the Tier-1 examination in place of the respondent.

4. Mr. Chowhan submits that every candidate is subjected to biometric verification and that his identity is correlated with his admit card before he is allowed to attempt the paper.

5. The apprehension of the petitioner was based on what they felt to be a mismatch in the hand writings and signatures on the admit cards under which the candidate had attempted the examination.

6. The matter was, therefore, referred to the Central Forensic Science Laboratory² for a comparison of the hand writings and signatures. Various signatures, purportedly appended by the respondent at the various stages of the selection process, as well as the signatures of the respondent were required to be compared with the sample specimens of hand writings and signatures. The samples were marked S1 to S42 whereas the signatures on the documents

¹ "MOD", hereinafter

² "CFSL" hereinafter



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submitted during the examination were Q 1 to Q12.

7. We may further note that Q11 was the sample of the signature purportedly appended by the respondent on the admit card under which the Tier 1 of the examination was undertaken and Q12 was the hand writing on the said admit card. It is not the case of the petitioner—as it cannot be – that Q 1 and Q 12 were written by two different persons, as both were on the admit card pertaining to Tier 1.

8. The matter travelled to the Central Administrative Tribunal³ by way of OA 2592/2022. The Tribunal noted that there were contradictory reports of the CFSL with respect to comparison of the signatures and hand writings of the respondent with the specimens and, therefore, deemed it appropriate, by order dated 22 May 2024, to direct a comparison of thumb impressions of the respondent as entered on the admit card with the specimen thumb impressions of the respondent.

9. The matter was, therefore, referred to the CFSL in accordance with the directions contained in the order dated 22 May 2024. The CFSL returned the following report on dated 31 January 2025 :

"12. WHEREAS CFSL New Delhi in its report dated 20.12.2024 opined that:

(a) The question thumb impression marked here as LTI, QT-1, QT-2 & QT-4 are identical with specimen left thumb impression of Shri Ravi having Roll No. marked here as LTS-1 on the slip marked as LTS-1 on the slip marked as S-1.



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(b) The question thumb impression marked here as RTI is identical with specimen right thumb impression of Sh. Ravi having Roll No. 2201427566 marked here as RTS-2 on the slip marked as S -2.

(c) The questioned thumb impression marked here as QT-3 is blurred/ smudged and does not contain sufficient number of clear ridge characteristics for comparison.

13. Therefore, in view of the reports received from CFSL Chandigarh and CFSL Delhi, and in compliance with the order of the Hon'ble CAT dated 22.05.2024 to complete the exercise to process the candidature of the applicant to a logical conclusion within 12 weeks, candidature of Shri Ravi is cancelled."

10. Learned counsel for the parties are *ad idem* that the thumb impressions QT-1, QT-2 and QT-4 pertained to Tier 2 and Tier 3 of the examination whereas the thumb impression QT-3 pertained to Tier 1 of the examination. As such, and quite unfortunately, the CFSL could not provide any conclusive report with respect to the thumb impression QT 3 as it was blurred. As a result, the CFSL report with respect to thumb impressions remained indeterminate, as the issue of whether the person who had undertaken the Tier 1 was the same as the person who undertook Tier 2 and Tier 3 examination, could not be decided on the basis of the said report.

11. We are also not in a position to refer the thumb impression qua Tier 1 again for examination as the thumb impression on the original admit card is smudged. In that view of the matter, referring the matter to CFSL again, would also not serve any purpose.

12. We are, therefore, left with the original handwriting reports of the CFSL.



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13. In so far as the original hand writing reports of the CFSL are concerned, there were two reports; the first dated 27 January 2021 and the second dated 3 March 2022. We deem it appropriate to reproduce these reports in their entirety thus :

“CFSL report dated 27 January 2021

"The documents of this case have been carefully and thoroughly examined and I am of the opinion that:

1. *The enclosed writings and signatures stamped and marked Q1 to Q11 and S1 to S23 have been written by one and the same person.*

2. It has not been possible to express any opinion regarding authorship or otherwise on the questioned writings stamped and marked Q12 when compared with the supplied standard writings marked S1, S4, S6, S7 and S15 for the manifest reasons that the writing characteristics as occurring in the questioned writings are not accounted for from the supplied standard writings. For thorough scientific examination and analysis as well as the study the nature and extent of variation of writing habits of the person concerned few more specimen writings written to dictation with fast speed on several sheets along with contemporaneous admittedly genuine writings written during normal course of routine containing similar letter and their combinations as occurring in the questioned writings by the person concerned are required. Such admittedly genuine writings may available on some existing documents e.g. note books, personal diary, official and personal correspondence, some official records etc.

The report dated 27.01.2021 gives the finding in favour of the applicant.

Q1 to Q11 are the signature and handwriting of the applicant on admission certificate of CHSL(10+2) Examination i.e. computer skill test and Tier-I Examination. The only space left for questioning was Q12 i.e. handwriting on admission certificate on CHSL (10+2) Tier-I examination. As per the report dated 27.1.2021 of CFSL, Q11 which is signature of the applicant is Tier-1 Examination matches with that of his sample signature taken in S1 to S23. Once, as per the report of CFSL, the signature



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matches in the Tier-I examination, *it confirms that come what may a finding of impersonation cannot be given against the applicant on the basis of CFSL report.* "

CFSL report dated 3 March 2022

“RESULT OF EXAMINATION

The documents of this case have been carefully and thoroughly examined and I am of the opinion that:

1. The person who wrote the enclosed. writings stamped and marked S15 and S24 to S42 did not write the enclosed writings stamped and marked Q12.
2. Opinion on Q1 to Q11 has already been expressed vide this laboratory opinion number CFSL @) 1736/2020/DOC/CX-138/2020/186 dated 27.01.2021.”

14. Mr. Swain, learned CGSC appearing for the UOI, understandably places reliance on the second report dated 3 March 2022, which opines that the person who wrote Q12 did not match with the samples S15, S24 to S42. Q12 happens to be a sample of the hand writing in the admit card pertaining to Teir 1.

15. Thus, apropos the hand writing on the admit card relating to Tier 1 as supplied to CFSL as Q12, the report dated 3 March 2022 was negative, whereas the report dated 27 January 2021 was indeterminate.

16. However, it is not in dispute that Q11 was the marked signature of the candidate who had attempted Paper 1 on the same admit card which carried the hand writing Q12. *In respect of Q11, we find that there is consistency of opinion of the CFSL in its report dated 27 January 2021 as well as 3 March 2022 to the effect that they tallied with the specimen signatures of the respondent.*



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17. *On the basis of the CFSL Report with respect to the signature, at least, there can be no doubt about the fact that it was the respondent who had appended his signature on the admit card relating to Tier 1.*

18. In that view of the matter, even if there was one contradictory report with respect to the hand writing and the other report being indeterminate, we are of the view that the respondent would be entitled to the benefit of doubt.

19. Though Mr. Swain has exhorted this Court to examine the signatures and hand writing for itself, and though we are aware that in *Lalit Popli v Canara Bank*⁴, the Supreme Court has held that in an appropriate case, the Court can compare hand writings, once the matter has travelled to the expert body, such as the CFSL, we have to refer to the report of the CFSL.

20. The position that arises from the aforesaid is as follows :

(i) Apropos the hand writing on the admit card pertaining to Tier 1, one report was adverse to the respondent and the other report was indeterminate.

(ii) So far as comparison of thumb impressions is concerned, no outcome arose from the CFSL examination, as the thumb impression on the original admit card pertaining to Tier 1 was



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smudged.

(iii) However, with respect to the signature of the person who had signed on the admit card pertaining to Tier 1, there were concurrent opinions by the CFSL that the signatures tallied with the specimen signature of the respondent.

21. Opinion (iii) is conclusive in favour of the respondent.

22. In that view of the matter, we do not feel that this is a case where we should interfere and exercise the jurisdiction vested in us by Article 226 of the Constitution of India, especially as it pertains to the candidature of a person who is seeking appointment to a post.

23. We make it clear that we have rendered this judgment keeping in view the peculiar facts of this case, in which we are inclined to extend the benefit of doubt to the respondent.

24. Accordingly, we do not deem it fit to entertain this writ petition, which is dismissed with no orders as to costs.

C. HARI SHANKAR, J.

OM PRAKASH SHUKLA, J.

APRIL 27, 2026/yg