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

+ W.P.(C) 16626/2025

MOHD VAKEEL USMANI AND ORS

.....Petitioners

Through: Ms. Shalini Nair, Adv.

versus

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA AND ANR.

.....Respondents

Through: Ms. Uma Prasuna Bachu (SPC), Mr.
Bipul Kumar (GP) for UoI.

CORAM:

HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE PURUSHAINDR KUMAR KAURAV

ORDER

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12.01.2026

1. The petitioners are the licensed photographers at Centrally Protected Monuments. Respondent No.2 cancelled the license of photographers' firms and only individual photographers were to be granted license.
2. The case of the petitioners is that Respondent no.1 notified a new policy for Archaeological Survey of India [ASI] photographers to perform within centrally protected monuments. It, however, abolished the category of nominee photographers.
3. On 17.07.2018, the respondent appears to have amended clause 2.8 of the policy recognizing all the licenses granted before 2012 along with nominee photographers. On 27.02.2025, the petitioners submitted a representation to respondent Nos.1 and 2 requesting that the petitioners be granted the right to appoint a nominee photographer. This representation



was rejected by the respondent on 15.07.2025.

4. Learned counsel appearing for the petitioners points out from order dated 15.07.2025 that the petitioners' names find place at serial no.10, 12 and 14, respectively. She, then, takes the Court through the reasoning for rejection of the applications in the said order. The same is extracted as under:

- "1. Clause 2.8 of the photography policy amended in 2018 is not applicable to the petitioners.*
- 2. The petitioners listed at Sl. Nos. 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 11, 13 and 15 to 21 (as mentioned under table above) do not possess valid photography licences.*
- 3. There is no provision for nominee in the Photographer Policy 2017 amended in 2018 for granting a fresh nominee. The photography license is not transferable.*
- 4. The petitioners listed at Sl. Nos. 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 15, 17, 19 and 21 have already been granted the nominee prior to 2012 through Hon'ble Court orders in various cases.*
- 5. The nominees were allowed to the petitioners of the W.P. (c) No. 516/2021, W.P. (c) No. 9860/2021 and 144/2023 due to some specific situation. Hence the department had no alteration in those in these instances."*

5. A perusal of the aforesaid would indicate that there is no discussion with respect to the reasons of rejection of the applications filed by applicant nos.10,12 and 14 who are the petitioners herein. Learned counsel appearing for the petitioner then places reliance on various orders, annexures P-10, 11 and 14 and the documents which relate to an earlier *lis*.

6. Having considered the overall conspectus of the situation, the Court deems it appropriate to direct the Superintendent Archaeologist under the Director General ASI to reconsider the petitioners' request within a period of six weeks from the date of receipt of a copy of the order passed today.

7. Let the petitioners to make a fresh representation along with a copy of this with petition as well as the order being passed by the Court. All rights



and contentions left open.

8. Respondent shall keep in mind that under almost similar circumstances, the licenses were granted. If there is no impediment in accepting the request of the petitioners, the same benefit of grant of license may also be extended to the petitioners.

9. Let an appropriate order be passed.

10. The petition stands disposed of.

PURUSHAINDR KUMAR KAURAV, J

JANUARY 12, 2026/P/MJ