



2026:DHC:760-DB



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IN THE HIGH COURT OF DELHI AT NEW DELHI

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*Judgment reserved on: 23.01.2026**Judgment pronounced on: 31.01.2026**Judgment uploaded on: 31.01.2026*

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W.P.(C) 17600/2024

SHAMAEM AYESHA JAWAID

.....Petitioner

Through: Petitioner in person.

versus

UNION OF INDIA THROUGH ITS SECRETARY
MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND
PENSIONS & ANR

.....Respondents

Through: Mr. R. V. Sinha with Mr. A. S.
Singh, Ms. Shriya Sharma,
Advs. for R1.Mr. Ravinder Agarwal, Mr.
Manish Kumar Singh, Mr. Vasu
Agarwal & Mr. Lekh Raj
Singh, Advs. for UPSC.**CORAM:****HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE ANIL KSHETARPAL****HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE AMIT MAHAJAN****J U D G M E N T****ANIL KSHETARPAL, J.:**

1. Through the present Petition, the Petitioner assails the correctness of the order dated 25.04.2023 [hereinafter referred to as 'Impugned Order'] passed by the Central Administrative Tribunal [hereinafter referred to as 'Tribunal'], whereby the Original Application (O.A.) filed by the Petitioner, along with four other Applicants, was dismissed.

2. In order to comprehend the issues involved in the present case,

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the relevant facts in brief are required to be noticed.

3. The present round of litigation arises out of dismissal of the OA filed by the Petitioner, wherein she, along with four other Applicants, sought to challenge and set aside the decision of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC)/Respondent No.2, through which they were disallowed from submitting the application form for the Civil Service Examination (CSE), 2023. The said examination, conducted by the Respondent No.2, comprised of three successive stages, namely, the preliminary examination, followed by the main examination and the personality test.

4. On 01.02.2023, Respondent No.2 issued a Recruitment Notice bearing No.05/2023-CSP [hereinafter referred to as 'Recruitment Notice'] for CSE, 2023, inviting applications for the preliminary examination. As per the Recruitment Notice, the candidates could apply online through the UPSC portal from 01.02.2023 to 21.02.2023 (06:00 pm).

5. In accordance with the prescribed procedure, candidates were required to register under the One Time Registration ('OTR') system. Once the OTR-ID was generated, the candidate became eligible to apply online for CSE. As per the prescribed rules, the OTR needed to be registered only once in a lifetime and could be completed at any time during the year, after which it would be valid for all future applications.

6. Upon successful generation of the OTR, candidates were required to submit their online applications through the portal of

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Respondent No.2, strictly in accordance with the instructions made available on the official portal/website of the Commission. The relevant instructions contained in the Recruitment Notice reads as under:

“How to apply:

Candidates are required to apply online by using the website upsconline.nic.in. It is essential for the applicant to register himself/herself first at One Time Registration (OTR) platform, available on the Commission's website, and then proceed for filling up the online application for the examination. OTR has to be registered only once in life time. This can be done anytime throughout the year. If the candidate is already registered, he/she can proceed straightway for filling up the online application for the examination.”

7. The Recruitment Notice further provided detailed instructions to be followed by the candidates in the form of Appendix II to the said notice. The relevant excerpt is produced hereunder:

“Instructions to the candidates for filling online applications

- *Candidates are required to apply Online using the website www.upsconline.nic.in.*
- *Salient features of the system of Online Application Form are given hereunder:*
 - *Detailed instructions for filling up online applications are available on the above mentioned website.*
- *Candidates will be required to complete the Online Application Form containing two stages viz. Part- I and Part-II as per the instructions available in the above mentioned site through drop down menus.*
- *The candidates are required to pay a fee of Rs.100/- Rupees One Hundred only) [Except SC/ST/ Female/Persons with Benchmark Disability candidates who are exempted from payment of fee] either by remitting the money in any branch of State Bank of India by cash, or by using net banking facility of any bank or by using any Visa/Master/RuPay/Credit/ Debit ' Card/ UPI Payment.*
- *Before start filling up Online Application, a candidate must have*

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his photograph and signature duly scanned in the .jpg format in such a manner that each file should not exceed 300 KB each and must not be less than 20 KB in size for the photograph and signature.

- The candidate should have details of one Photo ID Card viz. Aadhar Card/ Voter Card / PAN Card / Passport/ Driving License / Any other photo ID card issued by the State / Central Government. The details of this photo ID will have to be provided by the candidate while filling up the online application form. This photo ID will be used for all future references and the candidate is advised to carry this Photo ID while appearing for the Examination/ Personality Test.*
- The Online applications (Part I and II) can be filled from 15th Feb, 2023 to 21st Feb, 2023 till 18:00 Hrs.*
- Applicants should avoid submitting multiple applications. However, if due to any unavoidable circumstances, any applicant submits multiple applications then he/she must ensure that the applications with higher RID is complete in all respects.*
- In case of multiple applications, the applications with higher RID shall be entertained by the Commission and fee paid against one RID shall not be adjusted against any other RID.*
- The applicants must ensure that while filling their Application Form, they are providing their valid and active E-Mail IDs as the Commission may use electronic mode of communication while contacting them at different stages of examination process.*
- The applicants are advised to check their emails at regular intervals and ensure that the email addresses ending with @ nic.in are directed to their inbox folder and not to the SPAM folder or any other folder.*
- Candidates are strongly advised to apply online well in time without waiting for the last date for submission of Online Applications.”*

8. The Petitioner, who appeared in-person before the Court, contended that she made an attempt to generate her OTR on 21.02.2023, however, owing to an alleged technical glitch, she was unable to complete the OTR process. It is her case that the One Time

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Password ('OTP') required for verification was received after a delay of five minutes, which resulted in her inability to submit the application within the stipulated time. On the aforesaid ground, the Petitioner seeks relaxation of the upper age limit to enable her to appear for the CSE, 2026, contending that the CSE 2023, constituted her last permissible attempt and she has since crossed the prescribed age limit.

9. *Per contra*, it is stated by the Respondents that there was no technical glitch in the online application system and that on 21.02.2023, a total of 1,53,885 candidates successfully submitted their applications. Further, it was also disclosed that the Petitioner logged into the portal and generated her OTR at 18:49 hrs. on 21.02.2023 i.e. beyond the prescribed closing time of 18:00 hrs. for filing of application. It is also stated that the Petitioner logged into the system using the said OTR at 18:51 hrs. on the same date, whereas the application portal permitted the submission only upto 18:00 hrs., as also stipulated under Appendix-II to the Recruitment Notice.

10. It is against the aforesaid factual matrix, as unfolded before the before the Tribunal during the course of arguments, that the OA filed by the Petitioner came to be dismissed.

11. The Petitioner has also further submitted that owing to a technical glitch, the OTP was received after a delay of five minutes, thereby depriving her of the opportunity to submit her application within the stipulated time.

12. This Court has considered the submissions made by the

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Petitioner.

13. It is evident that a significantly large number of candidates submitted their applications on 21.02.2023. Notably, in Paragraph No.11 of the Reply filed by the Respondent No.2 before the Tribunal, it was admitted that certain technical issues were reported on 21.02.2023 between 10:00 hrs to 11:00 hrs, on account of which the OTP service became slow. Nevertheless, by 11:20 hrs, the SMS queue had been cleared and normal operations were resumed.

14. It is also evident that on 21.02.2023, around 20,904 candidates generated new OTR IDs between 15.30 hrs and 18:00 hrs, whereas a total of 1,22,151 new OTRs also came to be created on the same date. This Court was further apprised of the fact that approximately 11,00,000 candidates submitted their applications within the 21-day application window, i.e., from 01.02.2023 to 21.02.2023 (06:00 pm). It is apparent that the Petitioner has based her case on certain allegations which are not substantiated.

15. The Petitioner has also failed to demonstrate that there was any technical glitch or that the website was overburdened, causing difficulty in generating the OTR after 11:20 hrs. The candidates, in fact, had a period of 06 hrs and 40 minutes after the issue pertaining to the temporary slowdown of the website was resolved. Moreover, more than 1.5 lakhs candidates successfully registered on the same day.

16. In view of the aforesaid circumstances, including the undisputed timeline of the events, the large number of candidates who successfully submitted their applications within the prescribed period,

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this Court finds no reason to interfere with the Impugned Order.

17. Accordingly, the present Petition, being devoid of any merit, is dismissed.

ANIL KSHETARPAL, J.

AMIT MAHAJAN, J.

JANUARY 31, 2026

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