



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

**CWP-15972-2026 (O&M)
Date of Decision: 15.06.2026**

Vardhman Ranjan ...Petitioner(s)
Versus
State of Haryana and Another ...Respondent(s)
And

Sr. No.	Case No.	Petitioner(s)	Respondent(s)
2.	CWP-15907-2026 (O&M)	Dinesh	State of Haryana and Another
3.	CWP-16000-2026 (O&M)	Savin and Others	State of Haryana and Another
4.	CWP-16073-2026 (O&M)	Amit and Others	State of Haryana and Another
5.	CWP-16543-2026 (O&M)	Aashish	State of Haryana and Another
6.	CWP-16674-2026 (O&M)	Aditya yadav	State of Haryana and Another
7.	CWP-17304-2026 (O&M)	Sujit Verma	State of Haryana and Others
8.	CWP-17625-2026 (O&M)	Versha Rani	State of Haryana and Another
9.	CWP-17511-2026 (O&M)	Suman Rani	State of Haryana and Others
10.	CWP-17646-2026 (O&M)	Monika and Another	State of Haryana and Another

CORAM:- HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE JAGMOHAN BANSAL

Present:- Mr. Rajesh Sethi, Advocate
for the petitioner in CWP-15972-2026 (Through V.C.).

Mr. Sanchit Punia, Advocate
for the petitioner in CWP-15907-2026 (Through V.C.).

Mr. Birender Singh Rana, Senior Advocate with
Mr. Vijender Singh Ahlawat, Advocate and
Mr. Viresh Dahiya, Advocate
for the petitioner in CWP-16543-2026.

Mr. Ajit Singh, Advocate
for the petitioner in CWP-16674-2026.

Mr. Vishesh Dhaka, Advocate for
Mr. Rajat Mor, Advocate
for the petitioner in CWP-16000-2026, CWP-16073-2026,
CWP-17646-2026 and CWP-17625-2026.

Mr. Vineet Kumar, Advocate
for the petitioner in CWP-17304-2026.

Mr. Deepak Vashishth, DAG, Haryana.

Mr. Kanwal Goyal, Advocate
for the respondent-HPSC.

JAGMOHAN BANSAL, J. (ORAL)

1. As common issues are involved in the captioned petitions, with the consent of both sides, the same are hereby disposed of by this common order. For the sake of brevity and convenience, facts are borrowed from **CWP-15972-2026**.
2. The petitioner through instant petition under Articles 226/227 of the Constitution of India is seeking setting aside of preliminary examination result dated 04.05.2026 for the post of HCS (Executive Branch) and other allied services conducted on 26.04.2026 pursuant to Advertisement No.22/2026 dated 30.01.2026.
3. Pursuant to Advertisement No.22/2026 dated 30.01.2026, the petitioner applied for the advertised post under General Category. The selection process comprises General Studies Examination and Civil Services Aptitude Test (Qualifying Test) to be followed by final exam.
4. The petitioner appeared for the written test held on 26.04.2026. On 28.04.2026, the respondent uploaded answer key along with questions booklet on its website and invited objections from candidates with respect to the answers. A number of candidates submitted

their objections with respect to different questions. The objections came to be referred to subject experts. On the basis of opinion of subject experts, answers to few questions were modified and revised key was uploaded on official website on 02.05.2026. As per revised key, result was declared on 04.05.2026. Petitioner's name did not figure in the result.

5. On 21.05.2026, while issuing notice of motion, the following order was passed:

“Learned counsel for the petitioners assail the impugned Preliminary Examination result declared on 04.05.2026 (Annexure P-9) for the post of HCS (Ex. Br.) & other Allied Services conducted on 26.04.2026 pursuant to Advertisement No. 22/2026 dated 30.01.2026 (Annexure P-1) notified by respondent no. 2, inter-alia for the reason that Answer Key-Provisional as well as Final in so far as the Questions No. 17, 30, 31, 32, 59, 80 and 92 are absolutely wrong & incorrect, and contrary to reliable & primary source of information available, and as a result of which not only the whole process of selection has been vitiated from its inception but even the intent, aim & objective of fair competitive examination is rendered farce. Today, Mr. Kanwal Goyal, Advocate Sr. Panel Counsel for the respondent-HPSC has produced the experts report in sealed cover, the same is opened in Court and has been perused by the Court.

Notice of motion.

Since the State-respondents were served with an advance copy of the petition, Mr. Deepak Balyan, Addl. A.G., Haryana, has put in an appearance on their behalf, and Mr. Kanwal Goyal, Advocate, for respondent No.2, has put in an appearance on behalf of the respondent-HPSC and pray for time to file the written statement.

They may file a written statement two days prior to the next date of hearing, with an advance copy supplied to the

learned counsel for the opposite party.

The Secretary, Haryana Public Service Commission is directed to file an affidavit after obtaining comments from the Members of the Expert Committee, on the basis of which objections were adjudicated qua questions in dispute involved in these three petitions.

It is made clear that, in addition to the reference made by the petitioners to the answer key which is also supported specifically by prescribed syllabus of NCERT as asserted to be correct, the issue debated seems with reasons and logic, shall also be addressed.

It shall further be explained as to how many objections were received by the respondent/Commission and the time consumed to decide those objections before finalizing it. The report produced by Mr. Kanwar Goyal, Advocate Sr. Panel Counsel for the respondent-UOI has been returned back to him after perusing. It is for his record, which may form part of the subsequent pleadings on behalf of the Commission, if any.

List on 27.05.2026 for further consideration.

To be shown in the urgent list.

A photocopy of this order be placed on the file(s) of connected case(s).”

6. In compliance of aforesaid order, the respondent-Commission re-considered the issues raised by petitioners. As per reply filed by the Commission, second opinion of experts was obtained who did not suggest change in the final answer key.

7. A battery of lawyers representing the petitioner(s) submit that respondent revised result, as per opinion of experts without granting them opportunity, in any manner. They were neither confronted with objections of candidates nor granted opportunity to put forth their stand prior to revision of answer key. Action of respondent is contrary to

judgment dated 28.09.2017 passed by this Court in *CWP No.8015 of 2017* titled as *Ramandeep Kaur Versus Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)*. The answers prepared by experts are contrary to available authentic books. Answer of Question No.59 is contrary to even statutory provisions. The opinion expressed by experts is relevant, however, cannot be mechanically relied upon. The authorities including this Court is supposed to apply its mind before relying upon experts' opinion.

8. *Per contra*, learned counsel for HPSC submits that multiple objections were received from the candidates. All the objections were forwarded to the subject experts. On receipt of report of the subject experts answer key was revised and evaluation of OMR sheets was done. The Commission is not an expert body to decide the correctness of the answers and it is left to the subject experts. The Commission firstly at its own referred the matter to subject experts and thereafter keeping in mind interim orders of this Court. The opinion of experts remained same. The Commission has revised answer key as per opinion of experts. There is no rule, regulation or condition in the advertisement mandating that candidates must be confronted with objections raised by other candidates prior to finalising result as per opinion of subject experts. As per report of the subject experts, there is no change in the answers to the questions disputed by the petitioner(s). It is settled law that once the experts have finalized the answer key then the same shall be considered as final as the expertise in the academic matter is left to the experts only. In the event of doubt, the benefit should go to the examination authority rather than to

the candidate. In support of his contentions, learned State counsel relies upon judgment of Supreme Court in *Ran Vijay Singh and others v. State of Uttar Pradesh and others, (2018) 2 SCC 357* and *Bihar Staff Selection Commission and others v. Arun Kumar and others, (2020) 6 SCC 362*.

9. Heard the arguments and perused the record.
10. Learned counsel for respondent-HPSC produced report of subject experts in a sealed cover which after perusal was returned to him.
11. The petitioners have doubted answers of Question Nos. 17, 30, 31, 32, 59 and 80 which relate to General Studies Exam (Standard Question Booklet) and Question Nos. 6 and 50 which relate to Civil Services Aptitude Test (Standard Question Booklet). The aforesaid questions along with answers as per petitioners and as per experts are reproduced as below:

Question No.	Questions of General Studies Exam				Answer as per expert	Answer as per petitioners
17	Consider the following information:				Option B	Option C
	No.	Art Form	Origin/Community Associated	Key Feature		
	1.	Mohiniyattam	Chera patronage (9 th - 12 th Century CE)	Graceful swaying movements linked to Mohini incarnation of Vishnu		
	2.	Thullal	Introduced by Kunchan Nambiar	Solo satirical dance performed during temple festivals		
3.	Kutiyattam	Chakkiar Community	Dramatic performance lasting from six to twenty days			

	In how many of the above rows is the given Index information correctly matched? (A) Only one (B) Only two (C) All three (D) None (E) Question not attempted		
30	Which of the following is/are correct? 1. Industrial base of Haryana mainly consists of cotton textiles, Sugar processing and Farm machinery production. 2. The state also manufactures chemicals as a variety of consumer goods. Select the answer using the codes given below: (A) 1 only (B) 2 only (C) Both 1 and 2 (D) Neither 1 nor 2 (E) Question not attempted	Option B	Option C
31	Which of the following is/are correct? 1. The estimated fiscal deficit for Haryana as per Budget 2026-2027 is 2.6%. 2. In Haryana, effective revenue deficit has increased in past three years as the grants for creation of capital assets have gone down. Select the answer using the codes given below: (A) 1 only (B) 2 only (C) Both 1 and 2 (D) Neither 1 nor 2 (E) Question not attempted	Option D	Option A
32	Which of the following is/are correct? 1. According to Budget 2026-2027 for Haryana, maximum tax revenue comes from State Goods & Services Tax, followed by stamps & registration. 2. Haryana governments own tax revenue is estimated to increase by 11% in Budget 2026-2027 over revised budget 2025-2026. Select the answer using the codes given below: (A) 1 only (B) 2 only (C) Both 1 and 2 (D) Neither 1 nor 2 (E) Question not attempted	Option B	Option C
59	In the context of the “Parivar Pehchan Patra” (PPP) scheme of Haryana, which of the following statements is/are correct? 1. It mandates the creation of a 8-digit unique alphanumeric ID for every family residing in Haryana. 2. The data obtained through PPP is legally protected under the Haryana Parivar Pehchan Act, 2021, which designates the Haryana Trust Based Reading Authority as the date custodian.	Option A	Option D

	Select the answer using the codes given below: (A) 1 only (B) 2 only (C) Both 1 and 2 (D) Neither 1 nor 2 (E) Question not attempted		
80	Consider the following statements: 1. The doctrine of basic structure of the Constitution was propounded in the Keshwananda Bharti Case. 2. Right to property is not a part of the basic structure of the Constitution. 3. Only the Supreme Court and the High Courts have the right to decide whether any matter is a part of the basic structure of the Constitution. 4. The Parliament of India is not empowered to alter the basic structure of the Constitution. How many of the statements given above are correct? (A) Only one statement (B) Only two statement (C) Only three statement (D) All four statement (E) Question not attempted	Option D	Option C

Question Nos.	Questions of Civil Servies Aptitude Test	Answer as per expert	Answer as per petitioners
6	4 friends visit a church on every 13 th , 15 th , 17 th and 18 th day of the month. If all of them met at the church on a Monday, then on which day they will meet next? (A) Sunday (B) Tuesday (C) Saturday (D) Thursday (E) Question not attempted	Option D	No Option
50	Consider the following statements: 1. If all cats are animals, then all animals are cats. 2. If all dogs are animals, then all mammals are dogs. 3. If some birds are parrots, then all parrots are birds. How many of the statements given above are correct? (A) Only one (B) Only two (C) All three (D) None (E) Question not attempted	Option A	Option D

12. Before dwelling into the issue involved, it would be apposite to have bird's eye view of judicial precedents.

13. The Supreme Court in *U.P.P.S.C and another v. Rahul Singh and another, 2018 AIR (Supreme Court) 2861* while adverting to correctness of answers key has held that the law is well settled that onus is on the candidate to not only demonstrate that the answer key is incorrect but also that it is a glaring mistake which is totally apparent and no inferential process or reasoning is required to show that the answer key is wrong. The Constitutional Courts must exercise great restraint in such matters and should be reluctant to entertain a plea challenging the correctness of the answers key.

In *Ran Vijay Singh (supra)*, the Supreme Court while dealing with the question of re-evaluation or scrutiny of answer sheets has held that :

“30. The law on the subject is therefore, quite clear and we only propose to highlight a few significant conclusions. They are:

30.1 If a statute, Rule or Regulation governing an examination permits the re-evaluation of an answer sheet or scrutiny of an answer sheet as a matter of right, then the authority conducting the examination may permit it;

30.2 If a statute, Rule or Regulation governing an examination does not permit re-evaluation or scrutiny of an answer sheet (as distinct from prohibiting it) then the Court may permit reevaluation or scrutiny only if it is demonstrated very clearly, without any “inferential process of reasoning or by a process of rationalisation” and only in rare or exceptional cases that a material error has been committed;

30.3 The Court should not at all re-evaluate or scrutinize the answer sheets of a candidate – it has no Expertise in the matter and academic matters are best left to academics;

30.4 The Court should presume the correctness of the

key answers and proceed on that assumption; and
30.5 *In the event of a doubt, the benefit should go to the examination authority rather than to the candidate.”*

In ***High Court of Tripura v. Tirtha Sarathi Mukherjee and others, (2019) 16 SCC 663*** the Supreme Court has held that a grave injustice may be occasioned to a writ applicant in certain circumstances. The case may arise where despite giving the correct answer no marks are awarded. If there is any doubt, the doubt should be resolved in favour of the examining body rather than in favour of the candidate. The wide power under Article 226 of the Constitution of India may continue to be available even though there is no provision for re-valuation in a situation where a candidate despite having given correct answer and about which there cannot be even the slightest manner of doubt, is treated as having given the wrong answer and consequently the candidate is found disentitled to any marks.

14. Relying upon plethora of judgments, a Division Bench of this Court vide judgement dated 01.06.2023 in ***CWP No.11695 of 2023*** titled as ***“Navdeep Kaur vs. State of Punjab and others”*** has held that in the absence of allegations against the expert panel or malafide on the part of respondents, the Court cannot re-examine answer key and interfere in the matter.

15. Petitions in hand need to be adjudicated in the light of law enunciated by Hon’ble Supreme Court because there are no particular statutory provisions governing the issue involved.

16. The respondent in reply has clarified that objections raised by candidates were duly considered by subject experts and thereafter final

answer key was prepared. The matter was again referred to subject experts who have reiterated their opinion with respect to questions in dispute.

17. As laid down by Supreme Court, in case of doubt, the benefit of doubt should be given to Selection Committee, however, in the absence of doubt/ambiguity, the candidates cannot be deprived of marks of correct answer. On examination of final answer key prepared by Commission and answers suggested by petitioners, it comes out that it cannot be conclusively held that answers suggested by subject experts are manifestly incorrect. Thus, there is no scope to substitute opinion of subject experts. There is doubt with respect to answer of Question No. 59 (General Studies). The said question relates to Haryana Parivar Pehchan Act, 2021. As per afore-cited judgments, benefit of doubt must be extended to Selection Commission. Other questions are relating to art, culture, finance, budget, revenue etc. The answers to these questions, as suggested by subject experts, seem to be correct e.g. as per petitioners, estimated fiscal deficit for Haryana as per budget 2026-2027 is 2.6%. A perusal of budget reveals that correct figure is 2.65%. As per petitioners, there is no difference between 2.6% and 2.65%. Contention of petitioners is misconceived. Similarly, as per petitioners, maximum tax revenue of the State as per budget 2026-2027 comes from State GST followed by Stamps and Registration. A perusal of budget reveals that maximum tax revenue comes from State GST followed by share from Central Taxes.

18. The petitioners are claiming that revised key was released without granting them opportunity to file cross objections. They are

relying upon judgment of this court in *Ramandeep Kaur (supra)*. A Division Bench of this Court in *Sukhnoor Singh Versus Haryana Public Service Commission, Law Finder Doc Id#2610722* as well as a Co-ordinate Bench of this Court in *Amit and Others Versus State of Haryana and Others, Law Finder Doc Id#2687746*, after considering aforesaid judgment of *Ramandeep Kaur (supra)*, has held that there is no rule, regulation or any term/condition in the advertisement which permits candidates to file cross objections. The respondent-Commission in the present case has acted in a *bona fide* and transparent manner. The Commission has tried to resolve all the issues raised by candidates. If contention of petitioners is accepted, there would be never ending process of raising objections and it would be impossible for the Commission to finalize selection process. The Court cannot ignore the fact that exam in question was preliminary and final exam is going to take place in the end of this month. Any interference on the part of this Court, at the behest of very few unsuccessful candidates, would stall the entire selection process which would be precarious for the public at large as well as candidates who have been selected for the final exam.

19. In the wake of above discussion and findings, the instant petitions deserve to be dismissed and accordingly dismissed.

20. Pending application(s), if any, shall also stand disposed of.

(JAGMOHAN BANSAL)
JUDGE

15.06.2026
Prince Chawla

Whether Speaking/reasoned	Yes/No
Whether Reportable	Yes/No