



CGHC010237812026



2026:CGHC:34038

NAFR

HIGH COURT OF CHHATTISGARH AT BILASPUR

(Order Reserved on 31-07-2026)

(Final Order Delivered on 05-08-2026)

(Final Order Uploaded on 05-08-2026)

MCRC No. 5952 of 2026

Jeevan Kishor Dhruv S/o Late Shri Mansha Ram Dhruv Aged About 62 Years
R/o Quarter No. 9/c, Street No. 44, Sector 10, Bhilai, Distt Durg Chhattisgarh
Permanent Add Village Barnarakala, P.S. Dongargarh, Distt Rajnandgaon
Chhattisgarh

... Applicant**versus**

Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) Anti Corruption Branch Raipur, Through
Station House Officer (SHO), District Raipur Chhattisgarh

... Respondent**(Cause-title taken from Case Information System)**

For Applicant : Mr. Devershi Thakur, Advocate with Mr. Vimal
Pathak, Advocate

For Respondent/CBI : Mr. Vaibhav A. Goverdhan, Advocate

(Hon'ble Shri Justice Bibhu Datta Guru)**CAV Order**

1. The applicant has preferred this *first bail application* under Section 483 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023¹ for grant of regular bail as he has been arrested in connection with Crime No. RC1242024A0004 registered at Police Station CBI, Anti Corruption Branch/Economic Offence Wing, Raipur, District Raipur (C.G) for the offence punishable under Sections 120B & 420 of the Indian Penal Code² and Sections 7, 7A & 12 of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (as amended in 2018)³.
2. In respect of certain illegalities and irregularities committed by the authorities of the Chhattisgarh Public Service Commission⁴ in the recruitment process, two separate FIRs bearing Crime No.05/2024 of EOW/ACB, Chhattisgarh, Raipur and Crime No. 28/2024 of Arjunda PS, Dist. Balod, Chhattisgarh were registered and subsequently, the matter was transferred to the Central Bureau of Investigation⁵. Initially, in the said Crime Number, there were seven accused persons. A-1 Taman Singh Sonwani, the then Chairman of the PSC; A-2 Shravan Kumar Goyal, Director of Bajrang Power and Ispat Ltd.; A-3 Shashank Goyal (son of A-2); A-4 Ms. Bhumika Katiyar (Daughter-in-law of A-2); A-5 Nitesh Sonwani (nephew of A-1) & A-6 Sahil Sonwani (nephew of A-1) and A-7 Lalit Ganvir, Deputy Controller

1 henceforth 'the BNSS'

2 henceforth 'the IPC'

3 henceforth 'the PC Act'

4 henceforth 'the PSC'

5 henceforth 'the CBI'

(Examination) of the PSC. During the course of investigation, the applicant herein, who at the relevant time was posted as Secretary of the PSC, has been inculpated as A-8 along with other co-accused including the son of the applicant namely; Sumit Dhruv as A-9.

3. The case of the prosecution, in brief, is that during the period 2020–2022, the PSC conducted the State Service Examination. At the relevant time, A-1 was the Chairman of the PSC and is alleged to have extended undue advantage to his family members and favoured candidates. A-5 and A-6 are the nephews of A-1, while A-7 was posted as Deputy Controller (Examination) of the PSC. It is alleged that, under the instructions of A-1, the question papers were leaked and shared with A-5 and A-6, and thereafter A-7 shared the said question papers with A-2, who in turn provided the same to his son and daughter-in-law, namely A-3 and A-4.

The allegation against the applicant Jeevan Kishor Dhruv (A-8) is that during the relevant period he was posted as Secretary, of the PSC. It was the official duty of the applicant to maintain strict confidentiality in respect of the examinations conducted by the PSC. However, it is alleged that during the said period, for obtaining illegal direct and indirect benefits, the applicant along with other co-accused breached such confidentiality and provided question papers to his sons. On the basis of the same one of his son namely; Sumit Dhruv (A-9) selected as Dy. Collector.

4. (a) Learned counsel appearing for the applicant would submit that the applicant has been falsely implicated in the present case solely on account of his designation as Secretary of the PSC. It is argued that the applicant neither participated in the alleged paper leak nor is there any material demonstrating his involvement in the commission of the alleged offences. His name did not find place in the original FIR and he was implicated only subsequently during the course of investigation. He would next submit that except for seizure of one mobile phone, no incriminating article, document, electronic device or other material has been recovered or seized from the possession of the applicant. There is no evidence indicating that the applicant leaked any confidential question paper or transmitted any confidential information to his children. He would next submit that immediately upon learning that both of his sons were candidates in the PSC examination, the applicant himself informed the competent authorities of the PSC regarding the said fact and requested that he be kept away from all confidential work connected with the examination. Pursuant thereto, by orders of the higher authorities, the applicant was assigned no confidential work relating to the conduct of the examination, evaluation or preparation of question papers. Copies of the office orders and the representation submitted by the applicant have been placed on record.
- (b) Learned counsel would further submit that the prosecution itself alleges that the applicant was benefited because his son Sumit Dhruv (A-9) was selected as Deputy Collector. However, the factual

circumstances belie such allegation inasmuch as one of his sons, Amit Dhruv, was unsuccessful in the examination, while the other son, Sumit Dhruv, secured a place much below the top ranks. It is argued that had there been any manipulation or illegal favour, both sons would have secured top positions, which admittedly did not happen. He would next submit that the applicant had no nexus or acquaintance with the principal accused alleged to have leaked the question papers. No material has been collected by the investigating agency demonstrating any meeting of minds, conspiracy, communication or financial transaction between the applicant and the other co-accused persons. He would further submit that the investigation has been completed and charge-sheet as well as supplementary charge-sheet have already been filed. Consequently, custodial interrogation of the applicant is no longer required. The trial has not commenced, charges are yet to be framed and more than one hundred prosecution witnesses are proposed to be examined. Therefore, there is no likelihood of the trial concluding in the near future.

(c) According to the learned counsel, the applicant had earlier moved an application under Section 207 Cr.P.C./Section 230 BNSS seeking supply of complete documents and specifically pointed out that certain relevant documents had deliberately not been made part of the charge-sheet despite having been seized during investigation. The said documents, according to the applicant, would clearly establish that he had been excluded from all confidential examination-related work and

had taken every precaution to avoid any conflict of interest. Learned Counsel further places reliance upon the order of the Hon'ble Supreme Court granting bail to A-2, wherein the Apex Court noticed that the investigation had concluded, charge-sheet had been filed, custodial interrogation was not required and the trial was likely to take considerable time. It is submitted that the case of the present applicant stands on an equal, if not better, footing and he is, therefore, entitled to the benefit of parity. He would lastly submit that the applicant, who is a sexagenarian, is a retired IAS officer, has remained in judicial custody since 18.09.2025, has no criminal antecedents and there is no likelihood of his absconding or tampering with the prosecution evidence. Therefore, it is prayed that the applicant be enlarged on regular bail.

5. (i) Learned counsel appearing for the CBI, *per contra*, would oppose the bail application. He would submit that the applicant is not entitled to be enlarged on bail having regard to the nature and gravity of the offence, the material collected during investigation and the pivotal role attributed to him in the criminal conspiracy. It is submitted that the case pertains to large-scale irregularities in the conduct of the CGPSC State Civil Services Examination, 2021, which strikes at the very integrity and fairness of the public recruitment process affecting the confidence of thousands of candidates.
- (ii) Learned counsel would next submit that the CBI registered RC No. 1242024A0004 pursuant to the notifications issued by the State

Government and took over investigation from EOW/ACB. During investigation, it was revealed that the applicant, while functioning as Secretary, PSC, along with the then Chairman, Controller of Examination and other co-accused persons, entered into a criminal conspiracy for leaking confidential question papers of the CGPSC Main Examination, 2021 and thereby facilitated illegal benefit to his own son, Sumit Dhruv (A-9). He would next submit that investigation has disclosed that the applicant joined as Secretary, PSC on 06.10.2020 and the advertisement for the CGPSC Examination, 2021 was issued under his signatures. The applicant's son, Sumit Dhruv, applied for the said examination and was ultimately selected to the post of Deputy Collector. According to the prosecution, despite the applicant's official position and responsibility towards maintaining secrecy and confidentiality of the examination process, he abused his office to procure confidential question papers in advance and passed them on to his son.

(iii) Learned counsel would further submit that the main allegation against the applicant is that the applicant supplied the confidential question papers, particularly Paper No. 7 (General Studies) and Paper No. 2 (Essay), to his son, Sumit Dhruv (A-9), who was a candidate in the said examination. According to the prosecution, during the search conducted at the applicant's residence, copies of the questions and answers of Paper No.7 and the Question-cum-Answer Booklet of Paper No.2 (Essay) were recovered. Investigation further revealed that Sumit

Dhruv had practised essays on four specific topics, namely, (i) Cryptocurrency - A Reality, (ii) Russia-Ukraine War - Role of the United Nations, (iii) Dantewada District - Stages of Development, and (iv) Chhattisgarh Tonahi Pratadna Nivaran Act, and all the said questions/topics subsequently asked in the CGPSC Main Examination, 2021. On the strength of the aforesaid material, the prosecution alleges that the applicant had supplied the leaked questions/topics to his son prior to the examination, thereby enabling him to gain an undue advantage and ultimately secure selection to the post of Deputy Collector.

(iv) Learned counsel would further submit that during investigation, the Controller of Examination, Ms. Leena Kosam, disclosed that out of 47 questions contained in Paper No.7 of the Main Examination, 2021, as many as 42 questions were identical to those recovered from the residence of the applicant. She further identified the Question-cum-Answer Booklet of Paper No.2 bearing the bar code, dummy number and counterfoil as belonging to accused Sumit Dhruv. Investigation further revealed that before appearing in the examination, Sumit Dhruv had practiced essays on topics including Cryptocurrency, Russia-Ukraine War and the Role of the United Nations, Dantewada District and the Chhattisgarh Tonahi Pratadna Nivaran Act, which were subsequently asked in the Main Examination, thereby clearly indicating prior access to confidential examination material.

(v) Learned counsel submits that the statements of moderators naemly;

Smt. Nagratan Ganvir and Shri R.K. Purohit and other officials associated with the examination also corroborate the prosecution case. It has been revealed that the model answers prepared by moderators substantially matched the answers found in the seized material and that the confidential question papers were required to remain under strict secrecy until the examination. The investigation has also disclosed that without the approval and review of the competent authorities, no final question papers could have been printed or circulated, thereby indicating a concerted conspiracy involving senior functionaries of the Commission.

(vi) According to the learned counsel the applicant's defence that he had kept himself away from confidential work is belied by the material collected during investigation. Although the applicant claims that he had informed the authorities regarding participation of his sons in the examination, the prosecution case is that notwithstanding such claim, he remained part of the conspiracy and succeeded in obtaining confidential question papers which were thereafter utilized by his son before the examination. Learned counsel further submits that investigation culminated in filing of the charge-sheet and thereafter supplementary charge-sheets wherein the applicant, his son Sumit Dhruv and other accused persons have been charge-sheeted. The supplementary investigation has strengthened the prosecution case by collecting additional documentary and oral evidence demonstrating the role of the applicant in the conspiracy.

(vii) Learned counsel contends that the applicant cannot claim parity with A-2, who was granted bail by the Hon'ble Supreme Court. It is submitted that A-2 was a private individual, whereas the present applicant was a public servant occupying the high constitutional office of Secretary, CGPSC and was entrusted with maintaining secrecy, sanctity and integrity of the recruitment process. The allegations and the role attributed to the applicant are qualitatively different and substantially graver, and therefore the principle of parity is inapplicable. It is further submitted that the seriousness of the offence cannot be underestimated, as the alleged acts have undermined the credibility of a constitutional recruitment body and have adversely affected public confidence in the fairness of the selection process. The offence is not merely against an individual but against society at large and involves abuse of public office for securing illegal advantage.

(viii) Learned counsel lastly submits that the applicant is an influential retired senior bureaucrat having held a responsible position in the State administration. If enlarged on bail, there exists every likelihood that he may tamper with documentary evidence or influence prosecution witnesses, many of whom are officials connected with the functioning of the Commission. Considering the nature of allegations, the cogent documentary evidence collected during investigation, the recoveries effected from the applicant's residence, the official position occupied by him and the possibility of influencing witnesses, the respondent prays that the present bail application deserves to be rejected.

6. I have heard learned counsel for the parties at length and perused the documents placed before this Court.
7. It is reiterated again, as observed while considering the bail applications of other accused persons in the crime in question that a person who indulges in facilitating leakage of question paper relating to competitive examinations, plays with the career and future of lacs of young aspirants, who are '*burning the midnight oil*' to prepare for competitive exams, such an act is more heinous than an offence of murder because by killing a person, only one family gets affected but by ruining the career of lacs of aspirants whole society is adversely impacted. Therefore, the alleged charges levelled against the accused persons including the present applicants can by no stretch of imagination be termed as ordinary charges. The action of the accused persons is clear example of '*fence eating the crop*'.
8. Having considered the entire fact situation of the case; particularly considering the role attributed to the applicant who while functioning as Secretary, CGPSC, abused his official position by retaining confidential question papers of the CGPSC Main Examination, 2021 and supplying the same to his son, who was a candidate in the said examination. The prosecution has further collected material to show that the applicant's son had practiced four specific topics, all of which subsequently appeared in the Main Examination, and thereafter secured

selection to the post of Deputy Collector. The recoveries effected from the residence of the applicant, coupled with the statements of witnesses and other documentary evidence, *prima facie* indicate his involvement in the alleged conspiracy. Considering the specific role attributed to the applicant, the gravity of the allegations and their adverse impact on the sanctity of the public recruitment process, this Court is not persuaded to exercise its discretion in favour of the applicant. Further, considering the fact that in the entire examination process the accused persons including the present applicant have not maintained the confidentiality and the sanctity, this Court is of the considered opinion that present is not a fit case to grant bail to the applicant.

9. In the result, the bail application is **rejected**.

SD/-
(Bibhu Datta Guru)
JUDGE

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