



2026:CGHC:23637-DB

NAFR

HIGH COURT OF CHHATTISGARH AT BILASPUR**CRMP No. 1350 of 2026**

Smt. Shriya Panday (Dubey) W/o Manish Dubey Aged About 31 Years
R/o Sv 31, Street 01, Kokila Sadan, Siddhivinayak Colony, Indira Nagar,
Thana City Kotwali, Tehsil And District Raigarh (C.G.)

... **Petitioner(s)****versus**

1 - State Of Chhattisgarh Through Its Station House Officer, City Kotwali
Police Station, Bilaspur, Distt. Bilaspur (C.G.)

2 - Mamta Dubey W/o Late Krishna Kumar Dubey Aged About 58 Years
R/o Police Line Bilaspur Chhattisgarh

... **Respondent(s)**

For Petitioner(s) : Mr. Ujjwal Choubey, Advocate

For Respondent(s) : Mr. Shailendra Sharma, Panel Lawyer

Hon'ble Shri Ramesh Sinha, Chief Justice

Hon'ble Shri Ravindra Kumar Agrawal, Judge

Order on Board

Per Ramesh Sinha, Chief Justice

15.06.2026

1. Heard Mr. Ujjwal Choubey, learned counsel for the petitioner. Also heard Mr. Shailendra Sharma, learned Panel Lawyer for respondent



No.1/State.

2. The present petition has been filed by the petitioners with the following prayer:

“(i) Quash the FIR dated 21-06-2018 arising out of Crime No. 35/2018 registered against the petitioners’ under section 186,353,323 and 34 of the IPC at Mahila Police Station, Bilaspur, Distt. Bilaspur (C.G.).

(ii) Quash the consequential criminal proceedings and Charge sheet no. 13/2019, dated 12.04.2019 against the Petitioner in connection with Crime No. 35/2018 registered against the petitioners’ under section 186,353,323 and 34 of the IPC at Mahila Thana Bilaspur, Distt. Bilaspur (C.G.).

(iii) Kindly pass any other order or orders which this Hon’ble court deems fit and proper in the facts and circumstances of the case.”

3. Learned counsel for the Petitioner submits that the Petitioner was working as a media reporter with a news channel at the relevant time and, in the course of her professional duties, had visited Mahila Thana, Bilaspur on the night of 20.06.2018 after receiving information regarding the alleged detention of certain nurses and their spouses. It is submitted that the Petitioner had gone to the police station solely for the purpose of verifying the information and gathering facts concerning a matter of public importance. According to the Petitioner, when she sought clarification from the concerned police officials regarding the alleged detention, she and her media team were met with hostility and were compelled to leave the premises to avoid any further confrontation.



Learned counsel submits that the Petitioner had no intention to obstruct any public servant in the discharge of official duties and that her presence at the police station was in furtherance of her professional obligations as a journalist. It is further submitted that the Petitioner came to know about the registration of Crime No.35/2018 only subsequently and, upon acquiring such knowledge, approached the competent Court and was granted anticipatory bail. Thereafter, she got married, shifted to Raigarh and has since been leading a settled family life without any criminal antecedents.

4. Learned counsel further submits that the impugned prosecution is liable to be quashed on account of the extraordinary and unexplained delay in completion of the investigation and filing of the charge-sheet. It is contended that although the alleged incident pertains to 20.06.2018, the charge-sheet came to be filed only on 11.11.2024, after a lapse of more than six years, causing serious prejudice to the Petitioner and infringing her right to a fair and speedy trial guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution of India. It is argued that the investigation is founded solely on the statements of police personnel and interested witnesses, without any independent corroboration, despite the alleged occurrence having taken place at a public place. Learned counsel also points out that the statements collected during investigation suffer from material inconsistencies and contradictions. It is, therefore, submitted that the continuation of the criminal proceedings after such inordinate delay, coupled with the absence of reliable and independent evidence, amounts to an abuse of the process of law and deserves to be



interfered with by this Court in exercise of its inherent jurisdiction.

5. Per contra, learned State counsel opposes the petition and submits that the allegations levelled against the Petitioner disclose the commission of cognizable offences and that, after due investigation, sufficient material was collected to justify the filing of the charge-sheet and continuation of the criminal proceedings. It is submitted that the learned Trial Court has already taken cognizance on the basis of the material available on record and, therefore, the truthfulness, reliability and evidentiary value of the prosecution case cannot be examined in proceedings seeking quashment of the charge-sheet. Learned State Counsel further submits that the Petitioner was aware of the pendency of the criminal case, having obtained anticipatory bail during the course of proceedings, and subsequently appeared before the learned Trial Court pursuant to the order dated 27.03.2026. In compliance with the said order, the Petitioner furnished the requisite bail bond and surety, which were duly verified and accepted by the learned Judicial Magistrate First Class, Bilaspur. It is further submitted that the Trial Court has proceeded in accordance with law and has taken necessary steps for securing the presence of the co-accused Kailash Yadav by issuance of bailable warrant. The State contends that the grounds raised by the Petitioner pertain to disputed questions of fact requiring appreciation of evidence, which can be adjudicated only during trial, and that no exceptional circumstance exists warranting interference by this Court in exercise of its inherent jurisdiction. Accordingly, it is prayed that the petition, being devoid of merit, deserves to be dismissed.



6. We have heard learned counsel for the parties and perused the prayers and pleadings made in the petition along with the annexures annexed in this petition.

7. From perusal of the record, this Court finds that the alleged incident pertains to 20.06.2018, whereas the charge-sheet came to be filed only on 11.11.2024 after an unexplained delay of more than six years. The record does not disclose any satisfactory justification for such extraordinary delay on the part of the investigating agency. The right to a speedy investigation and trial forms an integral facet of Article 21 of the Constitution of India and cannot be defeated by administrative inaction or institutional lethargy. Continuation of criminal proceedings after such prolonged and unexplained delay would inevitably cause serious prejudice to the accused and would amount to subjecting her to unnecessary harassment.

8. This Court further finds that the allegations against the Petitioner arise out of her presence at the police station in her capacity as a journalist for the purpose of gathering information regarding a matter of public concern. A perusal of the case diary and charge-sheet material reveals that the prosecution case is founded primarily upon the statements of police personnel and interested witnesses, without any independent corroboration. The material collected during investigation does not disclose any overt act attributable to the Petitioner so as to prima facie establish the essential ingredients of the offences alleged against her. In the facts and circumstances of the present case,



permitting the prosecution to continue would amount to an abuse of the process of Court and would not serve the ends of justice.

9. Accordingly, the petition deserves to be and is hereby **allowed**. The FIR bearing Crime No.35/2018 registered at Mahila Thana, Bilaspur, the charge-sheet No.13/2019 dated 12.04.2019, the cognizance order passed pursuant thereto and all consequential criminal proceedings arising therefrom, so far as they relate to the present Petitioner, are hereby quashed.

**Sd/-
(Ravindra Kumar Agrawal)
Judge**

**Sd/-
(Ramesh Sinha)
Chief Justice**

Manpreet