



2026:CGHC:4034-DB
NAFR

HIGH COURT OF CHHATTISGARH AT BILASPUR

WA No. 60 of 2026

1 - Sanjay Kumar Sahu S/o Shri Ram Sudeen Sahu Aged About 29 Years R/o Matpara Near Bilaspur Chowk Ambikapur Tahsil Ambikapur District- Surguja Chhattisgarh District- Surguja (Ambikapur) Chhattisgarh,

... Appellant

versus

1 - State Of Chhattisgarh Through- The Secretary Department Of Revenue And Disaster Management Mantralaya Mahanadi Bhawan Naya Raipur District- Raipur, Chhattisgarh, District- Raipur Chhattisgarh,

2 - Commissioner Land Record Indravati Bhawan Naya Raipur, Distict- Raipur Chhattisgarh District- Raipur Chhattisgarh,

3 - The Collector Ambikapur District- Surguja Chhattisgarh District- Surguja (Ambikapur) Chhattisgarh,

4 - The Sub Divisional Officer (Revenue) Ambikapur District- Surguja Chhattisgarh District- Surguja (Ambikapur) Chhattisgarh,

5 - Vishnu Das S/o Parwan Das Presently Working As Patwari, Halka Number 27 At Sarkariya Tahsil Lakhanpur District- Ambikapur Chhattisgarh District- Surguja (Ambikapur) Chhattisgarh,

... Respondent(s)

For Appellant	:	Shri Mahesh Kumar Sharma, Advocate.
For State	:	Shri Shashank Thakur, Addl. Advocate General.

Hon'ble Shri Justice Ramesh Sinha, CJ

Hon'ble Shri Justice Ravindra Kumar Agrawal, J

Order on Board

23.01.2026

Per, Ramesh Sinha, CJ.

- 1** Heard learned counsel appearing for the parties on the application for condonation of delay of **224** days in preferring the instant appeal.
- 2** The appellant has filed this writ appeal against an order dated 10.03.2025, passed by learned Single Judge, in WPS No.5851 of 2018.
- 3** On a pointed query being made to the learned counsel for the

appellant as to why he has approached this Court against the impugned order after an inordinate delay of 224 days, he has not offered any plausible explanation or any cogent reason for delay in filing the writ appeal.

- 4 Learned counsel appearing for the respective respondents submit that the writ appeal is barred by delay and laches and further there is no cogent reason or explanation has been given in the delay and laches application filed for condonation of delay. Hence, the appeal is not liable to be entertained.
- 5 We have heard learned counsel appearing for the parties as also perused the application for condonation of delay in preferring the instant writ appeal.
- 6 The primary question that arises for consideration before this Court is whether the delay of about 224 days in preferring the present writ appeal deserves to be condoned or not.
- 7 Recently, the Hon'ble Supreme Court in the matter of ***State of Madhya Pradesh v. Ramkumar Choudhary, 2024 INSC 932***, while considering the delay, issued some directions and observed as follows:-

"5. The legal position is that where a case has been presented in the Court beyond limitation, the petitioner has to explain the Court as to what was the "sufficient cause" which means an adequate and enough reason which prevented him to approach the Court within limitation. In *Majji Sannemma v. Reddy Sridevi*, 2021 SCC Online SC 1260, it was held by this Court that even though limitation may harshly affect the rights of a party, it has to be applied with all its rigour when prescribed by statute. A reference was also made to the decision of this Court in *Ajay Dabra v. Pyare Ram*, 2023 SCC Online 92 wherein, it was held as follows:

"13. This Court in the case of *Basawaraj v. Special Land Acquisition Officer* [(2013) 14 SCC 81] while rejecting an application for condonation of delay for lack of sufficient cause has concluded in Paragraph 15 as follows:

"15. The law on the issue can be summarised to the effect that where a case has been presented in the court beyond limitation, the applicant has to explain the court as to what was the "sufficient cause" which means an adequate and enough reason which prevented him to approach the court within limitation. In

case a party is found to be negligent, or for want of bona fide on his part in the facts and circumstances of the case, or found to have not acted diligently or remained inactive, there cannot be a justified ground to condone the delay. No court could be justified in condoning such an inordinate delay by imposing any condition whatsoever. The application is to be decided only within the parameters laid down by this Court in regard to the condonation of delay. In case there was no sufficient cause to prevent a litigant to approach the court on time condoning the delay without any justification, putting any condition whatsoever, amounts to passing an order in violation of the statutory provisions and it tantamounts to showing utter disregard to the legislature.”

14. Therefore, we are of the considered opinion that the High Court did not commit any mistake in dismissing the delay condonation application of the present appellant.”

Thus, it is crystal clear that the discretion to condone the delay has to be exercised judiciously based on facts and circumstances of each case and that, the expression 'sufficient cause' cannot be liberally interpreted, if negligence, inaction or lack of bona fides is attributed to the party.

5.1. In *Union of India v. Jahangir Byramji Jeejeebhoy (D)* through his legal heir, 2024 INSC 262, wherein, one of us (J.B.Pardiwala, J) was a member, after referring to various decisions on the issue, it was in unequivocal terms observed by this Court that delay should not be excused as a matter of generosity and rendering substantial justice is not to cause prejudice to the opposite party. The relevant passage of the same is profitably extracted below:

“24. In the aforesaid circumstances, we made it very clear that we are not going to look into the merits of the matter as long as we are not convinced that sufficient cause has been made out for condonation of such a long and inordinate delay.

25. It hardly matters whether a litigant is a private party or a State or Union of India when it comes to condoning the gross delay of more than 12 years. If the litigant chooses to approach the court long after the lapse of the time prescribed under the relevant provisions of the law, then he cannot turn around and say that no prejudice would be caused to either side by the delay being condoned. This litigation between the parties started sometime in 1981. We are in 2024. Almost 43 years have elapsed. However, till date the respondent has not been able to reap the fruits of his decree. It would be a mockery of justice if we condone the delay of 12 years and 158 days and once again ask the respondent to undergo the rigmarole of the legal proceedings.

26. The length of the delay is a relevant matter which the court must take into consideration while considering whether the delay should be condoned or not. From the tenor of the approach of the appellants, it appears that they want to fix their own period of limitation for instituting the proceedings for which law has prescribed a period of limitation. Once it is held that a party has lost his right to have the matter considered on merits because of his own inaction for a long, it cannot be presumed to be non-deliberate delay and in such circumstances of the case, he cannot be heard to plead that the substantial justice deserves to be preferred as against the technical considerations. While considering the plea for condonation of delay, the court must not start with the merits

of the main matter. The court owes a duty to first ascertain the bona fides of the explanation offered by the party seeking condonation. It is only if the sufficient cause assigned by the litigant and the opposition of the other side is equally balanced that the court may bring into aid the merits of the matter for the purpose of condoning the delay.

27. We are of the view that the question of limitation is not merely a technical consideration. The rules of limitation are based on the principles of sound public policy and principles of equity. We should not keep the 'Sword of Damocles' hanging over the head of the respondent for indefinite period of time to be determined at the whims and fancies of the appellants.

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34. In view of the aforesaid, we have reached to the conclusion that the High Court committed no error much less any error of law in passing the impugned order. Even otherwise, the High Court was exercising its supervisory jurisdiction under Article 227 of the Constitution of India.

35. In a plethora of decisions of this Court, it has been said that delay should not be excused as a matter of generosity. Rendering substantial justice is not to cause prejudice to the opposite party. The appellants have failed to prove that they were reasonably diligent in prosecuting the matter and this vital test for condoning the delay is not satisfied in this case.

36. For all the foregoing reasons, this appeal fails and is hereby dismissed. There shall be no order as to costs."

Applying the above legal proposition to the facts of the present case, we are of the opinion that the High Court correctly refused to condone the delay and dismissed the appeal by observing that such inordinate delay was not explained satisfactorily, no sufficient cause was shown for the same, and no plausible reason was put forth by the State. Therefore, we are inclined to reject this petition at the threshold.

6. At the same time, we cannot simply brush aside the delay occurred in preferring the second appeal, due to callous and lackadaisical attitude on the part of the officials functioning in the State machinery. Though the Government adopts systematic approach in handling the legal issues and preferring the petitions/applications/ appeals well within the time, due to the fault on the part of the officials in merely communicating the information on time, huge revenue loss will be caused to the Government exchequer. The present case is one such case, wherein, enormous delay of 1788 days occasioned in preferring the second appeal due to the lapses on the part of the officials functioning under the State, though valuable Government lands were involved. Therefore, we direct the State to streamline the machinery touching the legal issues, offering legal opinion, filing of cases before the Tribunal / Courts, etc., fix the responsibility on the officer(s) concerned, and penalize the officer(s), who is/are responsible for delay, deviation, lapses, etc., if any, to the value of the loss caused to the Government. Such direction will have to be followed by all the States scrupulously.

7. There is one another aspect of the matter which we must not ignore or overlook. Over a period of time, we have noticed that whenever there is a plea for condonation of delay be it at the instance of a private litigant or State the delay is sought to be explained right from the time, the limitation starts and if there is a delay of say 2 years or 3 years or 4 years till the end of the same. For example if the period of

limitation is 90 days then the party seeking condonation has to explain why it was unable to institute the proceedings within that period of limitation. What events occurred after the 91st day till the last is of no consequence. The court is required to consider what came in the way of the party that it was unable to file it between the 1st day and the 90th day. It is true that a party is entitled to wait until the last day of limitation for filing an appeal. But when it allows the limitation to expire and pleads sufficient cause for not filing the appeal earlier, the sufficient cause must establish that because of some event or circumstance arising before the limitation expired it was not possible to file the appeal within time. No event or circumstance arising after the expiry of limitation can constitute such sufficient cause. There may be events or circumstances subsequent to the expiry of limitation which may further delay the filing of the appeal. But that the limitation has been allowed to expire without the appeal being filed must be traced to a cause arising within the period of limitation. (See: *Ajit Singh Thakur Singh and Another v. State of Gujarat*, AIR 1981 SC 733)."

- 8 Taking into account the facts and circumstances of the present case, in the light of the aforementioned judgment of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in **Ramkumar Choudhary** (supra), it is evident that the discretion to condone delay has to be exercised with great caution and only upon a clear and satisfactory demonstration of "sufficient cause." The law is well-settled that ignorance of law, by themselves, do not constitute such sufficient cause, and that negligence, inaction or lack of bona fides cannot be overlooked under the guise of advancing substantial justice.
- 9 In the backdrop of the aforesaid legal principles and upon careful consideration of the rival submissions, this Court finds that the delay of 224 days in filing the present appeal is grossly inordinate. The explanation offered by the appellant cannot be treated as "sufficient cause" in the eye of law.
- 10 The doctrine of limitation is founded upon public policy that seeks to ensure certainty and finality in litigation. Once the statutory period has expired, a litigant seeking indulgence of the Court must show diligence and bona fides, and must explain satisfactorily the circumstances which prevented timely action. In the present case, the appellant has

not been able to point out any circumstance arising within the period of limitation which disabled them from approaching this Court.

- 11** Therefore, this Court is constrained to hold that no case for condonation of delay is made out. The application for condonation of delay is accordingly **rejected**. As a consequence, the instant writ appeal, being hopelessly barred by limitation, also stands **dismissed** on the ground of **delay and laches**.

Sd/-
(Ravindra Kumar Agrawal)
Judge

Sd/-
(Ramesh Sinha)
Chief Justice

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