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* **IN THE HIGH COURT OF DELHI AT NEW DELHI**

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*Judgment reserved on: 05.02.2026**Judgment pronounced on: 20.03.2026**Judgment uploaded on: 20.03.2026*

- + W.P.(C) 938/2026 & CM APPL. 4600/2026, CM APPL. 4601/2026
GOVERNMENT OF NCT OF DELHI & ANR.Petitioners
versus
SEHDEV & ANR.Respondents
- + W.P.(C) 14309/2025 & CM APPL. 58577/2025
GOVERNMENT OF NCT OF DELHI & ORS.Petitioners
versus
ANJANA KUMARIRespondent
- + W.P.(C) 553/2019 , CM APPL. 2530/2019, CM APPL. 13682/2023
GOVT. OF NCT OF DELHI & ORSPetitioners
versus
MANISHARespondent
- + W.P.(C) 8979/2019, CM APPL. 37041/2019 & CM APPL. 38975/2019
GOVT. OF NCT OF DELHI AND ANR.Petitioners
versus
BIJENDER SINGH AND ORS.Respondents
- + W.P.(C) 10565/2019 & CM APPL. 43719/2019
GOVT. OF NCT OF DELHI & ORSPetitioners
versus
URMILARespondent
- + W.P.(C) 10837/2019 & CM APPL. 44872/2019
GOVT. OF NCT OF DELHI AND ORS.Petitioners
versus
RAJANIRespondent
- + W.P.(C) 11348/2019 & CM APPL. 46790/2019
GOVT. OF NCT OF DELHI THROUGH ITS CHIEF



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- SECRETARY & ORS
versus
GARIMA
.....Petitioners
.....Respondent
- + W.P.(C) 10765/2019 & CM APPL. 44459/2019
GOVT. OF NCT OF DELHI AND ORS.
.....Petitioners
versus
KM MARSI
.....Respondent
- + W.P.(C) 11793/2019 & CM APPL. 48373/2019
GOVT. OF NCT OF DELHI & ORS
.....Petitioners
versus
DEEPTI SINGHAL
.....Respondent
- + W.P.(C) 11997/2019
GOVT. OF NCT OF DELHI THROUGH ITS CHIEF
SECRETARY & ORS
.....Petitioners
versus
DEVI LAL SAINI
.....Respondent
- + W.P.(C) 13224/2019 & CM APPL. 53798/2019
GOVT OF NCT OF DELHI & ANR
.....Petitioners
versus
POONAM & ORS
.....Respondents
- + W.P.(C) 506/2023
RIMPY
.....Petitioner
versus
THE GOVT OF NCT OF DELHI & ORS.
.....Respondent
- + W.P.(C) 10949/2023 & CM APPL. 42484/2023
GOVT OF NCT OF DELHI AND ORS
.....Petitioners
versus
SAVITA
.....Respondent
- + W.P.(C) 11351/2023 & CM APPL. 44140/2023
GOVT OF NCT OF DELHI AND ORS.
.....Petitioners
versus
SANDHYA
.....Respondent
- + W.P.(C) 15993/2023, CM APPL. 64333/2023, CM APPL.



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DELHI SUBORDINATE SERVICES SELECTION BOARD
(DSSSB) AND ANRPetitioners
versus
POONAMRespondent
- + W.P.(C) 12996/2024 & CM APPL. 54123/2024, CM APPL.
65198/2025
GOVT OF NCT OF DELHI AND ORS.Petitioners
versus
SARITA & ANR.Respondents
- + W.P.(C) 15703/2024, CM APPL. 65935/2024 & CM APPL.
1614/2025
GOVT. OF NCT DELHI AND ORS.Petitioners
versus
SUMIT GAHLOTRespondent
- + W.P.(C) 3625/2025 & CM APPL. 16928/2025
GOVT OF NCT DELHI & ORS.Petitioners
versus
SAROJ KUMAR DASRespondent
- + W.P.(C) 19763/2025 & CM APPL. 82576/2025, CM APPL.
3719/2026
DELHI SUBORDINATE SERVICES SELECTION BOARD
& ANR.Petitioners
versus
RASHMI DAGAR & ORS.Respondents
- + W.P.(C) 9718/2019 & CM APPL. 40100/2019
GOVT. OF NCT OF DELHI AND ORS.Petitioners
versus
ADITYA KUMAR MISHRARespondent
- + W.P.(C) 12220/2025 & CM APPL. 49801/2025
GOVERNMENT OF NCT OF DELHI & ORS.Petitioners
versus
RAMAVTAR DHOBBIRespondent



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Present for the Petitioners:

Mr. Gaurav Dhingra, Mr. Shashank Singh and Mr. Bhupendra Singh
Advs.

Ms. Avnish Ahlawat, SC along with Mr. Uday Singh Ahlawat, Ms.
Tania Ahlawat and Mr. Nitish Kumar Singh, Advs.

Mr. Sujeet Kumar Mishra and Mr. Harsh Kumar Pandey, Advs.

Present for the Respondents:

Mr. Anil Mittal and Mr. Shaurya Mittal, Advs.

Mr. Anuj Aggarwal, Ms. Divya Aggarwal, Mr. Pradeep Kumar, Mr.
Shubham Bahl and Ms. Tanya Rose Advs.

Mr. Siddhant Gautam and Mr. Vivek Vishal Gautam, Advs.

Mr. Anil Singal and Ms. Nandita Sharma, Advs.

Mr. Saurabh Seth, Adv.

Mr. Himank Pal, Proxy Counsel.

Mr. Yudhvir Singh Chauhan, Adv.

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. The present batch of 21 Petitions have been filed by the Petitioners assailing 21 distinct judgments and orders rendered by the Central Administrative Tribunal, Principal Bench, New Delhi [hereinafter referred to as 'Tribunal'], whereby the *lis* concerning the rejection of the candidature of shortlisted candidates in the backdrop of non-filing of e-dossiers and requisite documents, after qualifying the written examination conducted by the Delhi Subordinate Services Selection Board (DSSB) for various post codes across different departments, was adjudicated upon.



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2. Since all 21 petitions arise out of the same *lis*, albeit on distinct factual matrix, with the consent of learned counsel for the parties, this Court deems it appropriate to dispose of all the petitions *via* this common judgment. A tabular representation of the petitions and the respective judgments and orders from which they arise is presented below:

S. No.	Petition Nos.	Details of case against which the petitions have been filed	Date of impugned judgment/order
1.	W.P.(C) 938/2026	O.A. No.2060/2020 titled Sehdev v GNCTD & Ors.	16.09.2025/ IO-1
2.	W.P.(C) 4309/2025	O.A. No.2906/2019 titled Anjana Kumari v GNCTD & Ors.	29.05.2025/IO-2
3.	W.P.(C) 553/2019	O.A. No.4042/2017 titled Manisha v GNCTD & Ors.	29.10.2018/IO-3
4.	W.P.(C) 8979/2019	O.A. No.711/2019 titled Bijender Singh & Ors. v GNCTD & Anr.	05.03.2019/IO-4
5.	W.P.(C) 10565/2019	O.A. No.100/712/2019 titled Urmila v GNCTD & Ors.	05.03.2019/IO-5
6.	W.P.(C) 10837/2019	O.A. No.974/2019 titled Rajani v GNCTD & Ors.	27.03.2019/IO-6
7.	W.P.(C) 11348/2019	O.A. No.1008/2019 titled Garima v. GNCTD & Ors.	29.03.2018/IO-7
8.	W.P.(C) 10765/2019	O.A. No.963/2019 titled Marsi v. GNCTD & Ors.	26.03.2019/IO-8
9.	W.P.(C)	O.A. No.3992/2017 titled Deepti Singhal v.	23.05.2019/IO-9



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	11793/2019	GNCTD & Ors.	
10.	W.P.(C) 11997/2019	O.A. No.937/2019 titled Devi Lal Saini v. GNCTD & Ors.	20.03.2019/IO-10
11.	W.P.(C) 13224/2019	O.A. No.876/2019 titled Poonam v. GNCTD & Ors.	26.04.2019/IO-11
12.	W.P.(C) 506/2023	O.A. No.3202/2017 titled Rimpy v. GNCTD & Ors.	28.10.2022/IO-12
13.	W.P.(C) 10949/2023	O.A. No.1953/2020 titled Savita v. GNCTD & Ors.	09.05.2023/IO-13
14.	W.P.(C) 11351/2023	O.A. No.2485/2017 titled Sandhya v. GNCTD & Ors.	02.06.2023/IO-14
15.	W.P.(C) 15993/2023	O.A. No.1923/2019 titled Mukesh Kumar v. DSSSB & Anr.	17.05.2023/IO-15
16.	W.P.(C) 12996/2024	O.A. No.4222/2017 titled Sarita & Anr. v. GNCTD & Ors.	02.07.2025/IO-16
17.	W.P.(C) 15703/2024	O.A. No.4163/2017 titled Sumit Gahlot v. GNCTD & Ors.	27.05.2024/IO-17
18.	W.P.(C) 3625/2025	O.A. No.3770/2018 titled Saroj Kumar Das v. GNCTD & Ors.	08.07.2024/IO-18
19.	W.P.(C) 19763/2025	O.A. No.2685/2016 titled Rashmi Dagar & Anr. v. GNCTD & Ors.	05.08.2025/IO-19
20.	W.P.(C) 9718/2019	O.A. No.991/2019 titled Sh. Aditya Kumar Mishra v. GNCTD & Ors.	28.03.2019/IO-20
21.	W.P.(C) 12220/2025	O.A. No.1654/2019 titled Ramavtar Dhobi v. NCTD & Ors.	31.01.2025/IO-21



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3. Notably, the petitions enumerated at serial Nos.1 to 11 and 13 to 21, have been filed by the Government and its instrumentalities whereas, the petition at serial No.12, has been filed by a private individual.

4. In order to obviate any ambiguity and to ensure clarity and consistency in the narration and analysis that follows, the parties hereinafter, wherever necessary, shall be addressed as the 'Government' and the 'private party/s', as the context may require.

5. In the writ petitions enlisted under serial Nos.1 to 11 and 13 to 21, the Government, has been directed to re-consider the cancellation of the candidature of the private parties, despite the failure to upload the e-dossier within the prescribed time period. Whereas the writ petition enlisted under serial No.12 has been filed by the private party assailing the judgment dated 28.10.2022, wherein the OA filed by her, was dismissed, thereby upholding the cancellation of her candidature on account of failure to upload her e-dossier within the prescribed time period.

6. By and large, the Tribunal by way of IO-1, IO-2, IO-3, IO-6 to IO-9, IO-11, IO-13 and IO-14 to IO-19, found that the failure on account of the private parties to upload e-dossiers was attributable to deficiencies in communication by the Government, such as absence of SMS/e-mail intimation or reliance on general website notices. The tribunal held that minor procedural lapses should not defeat substantive merit. Additionally, in IO-2 the Tribunal emphasized that the candidates who score higher marks than the last selected candidate could not be rejected solely for procedural default. Whereas in IO-14,



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the Tribunal emphasized that the private party therein was meritorious and in her third trimester of pregnancy, hence, the government should have taken a lenient view. It was against the aforesaid factual backdrop that, it was held that she should not have been deprived of her right to get appointment, merely for procedural lapses attributable to the Government. Accordingly, in the aforementioned cases, the Tribunal directed acceptance of the e-dossier beyond the prescribed time period.

7. Whereas in IO-4 and IO-5, the Tribunal, by way of an interim relief, at a prima facie stage, permitted provisional submission and consideration of documents within a limited time frame so as to prevent irreversible prejudice to the private parties, without finally adjudicating the merits.

8. By way of IO-20, the Tribunal, while taking note of the fact that the private party was visually handicapped and forced to rely on the reading of the DSSSB notice for the submission of e-dossier, held that equitable accommodation was warranted. In view of the aforesaid, the e-dossier was permitted to be submitted in hard copy within a short time frame.

9. In IO-21, the Tribunal while synthesizing the judgment of this Court in *W.P.(C) 2892/2019* captioned ***Pushpendra Singh Parnami v DSSSB*** and *W.P. (C) 4085/2019* captioned ***Mrs. Jyoti v GNCTD & Anr.*** as well as its prior decisions in *O.A. No.1923/2019* captioned ***Mukesh Kumar v. DSSSB & Anr.*** and *O.A. No.4163/2017* captioned ***Sumit Gahlot v. GNCTD & Ors.***, allowed the OA filed by the private party, while noting that there is no record to show that the e-mail sent



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to the private party was actually received thereof.

10. On the contrary, in IO-12, the Tribunal applied the strict online process doctrine enumerated in the judgment of this Court in ***Pushpendra Singh Parnami (Supra)***. Relying on the aforesaid judgment, it was held that the candidates are obliged to monitor the DSSSB website, thereby complying with the requirement of submission of e-dossier within the prescribed time limit. Accordingly, the relaxation as sought for by way of the OA was refused on account of no lapse on the part of the DSSSB and to avoid discrimination against other candidates.

BRIEF BACKGROUND:

11. The Petitioners, have now approached this Court, seeking to challenge the correctness of the impugned judgments/orders.

12. Notwithstanding the commonality of the principal question of law involved, this Court is of the considered view that factual substratum of each petition is distinct and warrants independent delineation. Such segregation is necessitated in order to effectively adjudicate upon the question whether the delay in submission of the e-dossier, in the peculiar facts of each petition, is liable to be condoned so as to preserve the candidature of the concerned private party.

13. While the overarching controversy in all the petitions pertains to the permissibility of condonation of delay in uploading the e-dossier subsequent to qualifying the written examination, the cause of action espoused by each private party is distinct. Additionally, the dates of issuance of advertisements, the prescribed timelines for



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submission of e-dossiers, the dates of finalisation of the selection process, the preparation of the list of shortlisted candidates, as well as the period of delay in each case, are materially divergent. Similarly, the explanations tendered for such delay by each private party is case specific and necessitates individual scrutiny.

14. In view of the aforesaid and for the sake of precision and convenience, a tabulated categorisation of the relevant details is provided hereinbelow *qua* the separate categories and timelines of each case:

Table No.1: List of relevant dates including the date of recruitment notice, notice inviting submission of e-dossiers, prescribed window for uploading the e-dossier and the date of finalisation of the selection process.

S. Nos.	Petition Nos.	Date of recruitment Advt.	Notice on website to shortlisted candidates	Period for uploading e-dossiers	Date of validity/ reserve panel/ Selection Closed
1.	W.P.(C) 938/2026	21.11.2017	25.09.2019	27.09.2019 to 11.10.2019	11.03.2021
2.	W.P.(C) 14309/2025	20.12.2017	14.09.2018	19.09.2018 to 28.09.2018	27.02.2020
3.	W.P.(C) 553/2019	10.10.2014	20.07.2017	28.07.2017 to 10.08.2017 Extended twice upto 25.08.2017	10.09.2018
4.	W.P.(C) 8979/2019	20.12.2017	30.01.2019	04.02.2019 to	29.04.2020



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				13.02.2019	
5.	W.P.(C) 10565/2019	20.12.2017	14.01.2019	15.01.2019 to 24.01.2019	27.03.2020
6.	W.P.(C) 10837/2019	20.12.2017	04.01.2019	09.01.2019 to 18.01.2019	12.03.2020
7.	W.P.(C) 11348/2019	20.12.2017	26.02.2019	28.02.2019 to 09.03.2019	22.03.2020
8.	W.P.(C) 10765/2019	20.12.2017	07.02.2019	12.02.2019 to 21.02.2019	27.03.2020
9.	W.P.(C) 11793/2019	12.12.2014	04.09.2017	04.09.2017 to 08.10.2017	06.11.2018
10.	W.P.(C) 11997/2019	20.12.2017	15.02.2019	20.02.2019 to 01.03.2019	27.05.2020
11.	W.P.(C) 13224/2019	2014	04.10.2017	04.10.2017 to 25.10.2017	01.08.2018
12.	W.P.(C) 506/2023	12.12.2014	27.04.2017	27.04.2017 to 12.05.2017	05.06.2018
13.	W.P.(C) 10949/2023	05.09.2019	22.06.2020	30.06.2020 to 14.07.2020	18.11.2021
14.	W.P.(C) 11351/2023	12.12.2014	06.06.2017	27.04.2017 to 12.05.2017	05.06.2018
15.	W.P.(C) 15993/2023	20.12.2017	21.01.2019	23.01.2019 to 01.02.2019	03.04.2019
16.	W.P.(C) 12996/2024	12.12.2014	06.06.2017	27.04.2017 to 12.05.2017	05.06.2018
17.	W.P.(C) 15703/2024	27.01.2014	27.09.2017	21.07.2017 to 31.01.2017	26.09.2018



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				extended to 25.08.2017	
18.	W.P.(C) 3625/2025	12.12.2014	10.11.2017	04.09.2017 to 18.09.2017 extended to 30.09.2017	05.06.2018
19.	W.P.(C) 19763/2025	January, 2014	02.03.2016/ 05.05.2016/ 23.05.2016	02.03.2016 to 18.03.2016 05.05.2016 to 13.05.2016	23.05.2016
20.	W.P.(C) 9718/2019	2017	30.01.2019	04.02.2019 to 13.02.2019	29.04.2020
21.	W.P.(C) 12220/2025	20.12.2017	30.01.2019	04.02.2019 to 13.02.2019	29.04.2020

15. This Court has heard learned counsel appearing for the parties at length and with their able assistance has perused the paper book.

SUBMISSIONS ON BEHALF OF THE PARTIES:

16. Learned counsel for the parties have filed their respective written submission and have relied upon judgments thereof. The contentions of the parties are examined hereinafter.

17. In substance, learned Counsel for the Government, while supporting the rejection of the private parties, has made the following submissions:

17.1 It has been argued that the Tribunal by way of the IOs, except IO-12, erred in directing acceptance of the documents, disregarding the non-compliance and the time-bound, electronic nature of the



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recruitment process. In support of this contention, it is the case of the Government, that all shortlisted candidates, including the private parties before this Court, were afforded sufficient opportunity to upload their e-dossiers as per the respective Result Notices uploaded on the website.

17.2 Further, it has been contended that, even otherwise, it was the duty of the private parties to keep a track of the website in order to attain the information pertaining to the upload of e-dossier as well as the intimation of the results uploaded thereof.

17.3 Moreover, it is also contended that the private parties had received the SMS and/or e-mail regarding the upload of e-dossier, notwithstanding such intimation, they failed to upload their documents through e-dossier.

17.4 In addition to the aforestated, while challenging the IO-15, it has been argued that the concerned private party, on one hand, asserts that no SMS or email was received by her. However, on the other hand, it has been admitted by her that the email containing information regarding the uploading of e-dossier was received after the cut-off date.

18. *Per contra*, learned counsels for the private parties, while challenging the rejection by the Government, have opposed the petitions filed before this Court, by submitting that the order passed by the Tribunal does not call for any interference by this Court and thus the present petitions deserve to be dismissed.



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19. Additionally, the principal contention of the private parties pertains to the allegation that, despite being shortlisted, no intimation to that effect was conveyed to them by the Government, either by SMS or email, as required by the applicable instructions.

ANALYSIS AND REASONING:

20. This Court has considered the submissions made by the learned counsel for the parties and have perused the paperbook as well as the judgments relied upon.

21. As already enumerated in the preceding paragraph of this judgment, the only issue which arises for the consideration of this Court is whether rejection of candidature on account of non-submission of the e-dossier within the prescribed time period can be sustained, especially, in circumstances where the communication regarding shortlisting and requirement of uploading the e-dossier was not demonstrably received by the concerned candidate.

22. Before proceeding to deal with the arguments advanced by the learned counsel for the parties, we deem it appropriate to reproduce the relevant extracts of the Advertisement Notice, the subsequent Admit Card and Result Notices issued by the Government. These documents constitute the foundational record, thereby delineating the procedural framework governing the submission of applications for the various posts against which the private parties participated in the written examination, as well as the consequential steps arising therefrom. For the sake of analytical clarity and convenience, we propose to treat W.P.(C) No. 14309/2025 and the documents placed



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on record therein as the lead matter for the present adjudication. The relevant extracts of the Advertisement, the Admit Card, and the Result Notice are reproduced hereunder for ready reference-

Advertisement-

Note 4. The successful candidates will be required to submit legible self attested copies of the documents, Admit Card alongwith the hard copy of printout of online application for at the time of verification of documents (any information contained in the attached certificates shall not be considered unless it is claimed in the application form)

Admit Card-

Instruction for candidates

8. *Uploading of mobile number & e-mail in OARS to ensured as all intimation will be given through website, e-mail and SMS only and no intimation through individual letters will be given.*

Result Notice-

The link for uploading e-dossier shall be kept open for a period of 10 days w.e.f. 19/09/2018 to 28/09/2018. The candidates uploading e-dossier should ensure that they fulfills all the eligibility criteria as on the cutoff date, i.e. 31/01/2018. The shortlisted are also being separately informed through SMS & E-mail on their registered mobile number & r-mail id. If, any candidate fails to upload the e-dossier during the above said period, her candidature will be rejected and no further opportunity for uploading e-dossier will be given on whatsoever ground.

23. A perusal of the Advertisement Notice unequivocally demonstrates that the private parties were required to submit hard copies of the relevant documents, thereby evincing that, at its inception, the recruitment process was contemplated to be conducted in the conventional offline mode and not through an online mechanism. The employment of the expression “successful candidates” at the very threshold of the advertisement further lends credence to the inference that those candidates who were to submit the requisite documents would, prior thereto, be apprised of their successful qualification in the written examination.



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24. Whereas, the Admit Card, under the head “Instructions for Candidates,” categorically mandated that each candidate must ensure the uploading of her or his mobile number and e-mail address. Moreover, it was also stipulated therein that all future updates pertaining to the examination would be communicated through three distinct modes, namely: (i) mobile number, (ii) e-mail address, and (iii) the official website. A purposive and conjoint reading of the said stipulation makes it clear that intimation of subsequent developments was not intended to be confined merely to a website notification but was also required to be affirmatively communicated through electronic mail and telephonic messaging.

25. Further, a perusal of the Result Notice, reveals that the shortlisted candidates were stated to have been duly informed regarding the uploading of their e-dossier through their registered mobile numbers and e-mail addresses.

26. A cumulative and harmonious construction of the Advertisement Notice, the Admit Card, and the Result Notice, renders it explicit that the recruitment process, as originally conceived, was to be undertaken offline. Whereas the requirement of uploading documents in the form of an e-dossier emerged, subsequently, through the result notice. Significantly, during the course of arguments, and even in the pleadings placed before this Court, the Government has failed to discharge the burden cast upon it to demonstrate that any prior or specific intimation was furnished to the candidates apprising them of the alteration in the mode of submission, i.e., from offline to online.



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27. It is a settled principle of administrative law that a communication, particularly one entailing civil consequences, attains legal efficacy only when it is effectively communicated to the concerned person. Meaning thereby, mere issuance of a notice or its unilateral uploading on a website, without proof of its receipt or due intimation, cannot *ipso facto* be construed as valid communication.

28. In the peculiar and distinct facts of the present batch, the rejection of candidature, undoubtedly, results in adverse civil consequences. Accordingly, in the backdrop of such civil consequences, the Government must show that the candidate was duly informed of the requirement to upload the e-dossier within the prescribed time period.

29. The Government before this Court, has argued its case substantially on the plea that the Result Notices were uploaded on the official website and the candidates were under an obligation to keep visiting the same. However, the doctrine of effective communication does not stand diluted merely because the process is electronic in nature.

30. In this regard, a reference may be made to the judgment of this Court in ***W.P. (C) 2786/2018*** captioned ***GNCTD & Ors. v. Jagdeep***, wherein this Court, while upholding the view taken by the Tribunal, held that a general web notice was not by itself sufficient, particularly, when the recruitment architecture had not apprised the candidates that they would only be informed via website and no individual communication would follow. In such circumstances, the Court accepted the candidate's assertion that he had no knowledge of the



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rejection notice and held that he could not be expected to keep checking the website “on his own from time to time”.

31. At this stage, it becomes pertinent to highlight that the Government in the present batch of cases, had adopted a dual track design with respect to the intimation of the information pertaining to the respective examinations. The Advertisement, Admit Card and Result Notice collectively advised the candidates to keep visiting the website for updates, while expressly stating that the shortlisted candidates would be separately intimated by SMS and e-mail on their registered mobile numbers and email IDs.

32. Notably, the Advertisement Notice clearly stipulated that the candidates who are selected or shortlisted would be required to submit requisite documents. Such stipulation necessarily pre-supposes that such shortlisted status will be effectively communicated to the concerned candidates. To put it differently, the obligation to submit documents cannot arise *in vacuo*, and is contingent upon a prior intimation of status. This position also finds affirmation in the judgment of this Court in ***W.P. (C) 17117/2024*** titled ***DSSB and Anr. v Mohan Lal Chhedwal***, wherein it was observed that where further compliance is predicated upon selection or shortlisting, the recruiting authority bears the corresponding duty to ensure proper communication of such status to the candidate concerned.

33. Therefore, under the Government’s own scheme, the composite communication was not merely a facility but an integral part of the recruitment structure. Once the Government chooses to represent in its official documents that the candidates will be individually intimated



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by SMS and email, the communication will only be treated as complete when the website notice is uploaded and the candidates are intimated through SMS and email. In such circumstances, the doctrine of legitimate expectation would be ensued in favour of the candidate, who were entitled to presume that she or he will receive such specific intimation through all prescribed channels, before being non-suited for failure to upload e-dossier.

34. In view of the explicit stipulation in the Admit Card that communication would be effected through three distinct modes, it was incumbent upon the Government to ensure strict and scrupulous compliance therewith. Once the Government undertakes to use SMS and email as a mode of prior intimation, it cannot approbate and reprobate from its own procedural architecture devised by the Government itself. Moreover, the Government cannot selectively enforce only those components which operate against the candidate, while disregarding those which imposes duties upon itself.

35. Hence, if a Recruiting Authority intends to rely exclusively on general notifications, it must do so clearly and unequivocally. The relevant documents should explicitly state that no separate or individual communication will be issued, and candidates are required to remain vigilant, thereby complying strictly within the stipulated timelines. Such distinction drawn by the recruitment authority at the initiation of the process, would bring clarity while minimizing ambiguity and preventing future disputes.

36. However, in cases where the Selection Board or recruiting agency chooses to adopt the mode of individual communication, either



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by post, email, SMS, or any other electronic means, it assumes a corresponding legal responsibility. Once the recruiting authority adopts such a mode by way of its own communications, the burden of proving effective dispatch and communication rests squarely upon the said authority. In such a scenario, it would not be sufficient to merely state that communication was sent; the authority must be in a position to demonstrate, through records or credible evidence, that reasonable steps were taken to ensure that the candidate was duly informed in the prescribed manner.

37. In absence of such proof, the Court would be justified in drawing an adverse inference against the Selection Board, since an administrative convenience cannot override principles of natural justice, thereby penalizing the candidate for non-compliance with a requirement of which she or he was never effectively informed.

38. It is equally pertinent to highlight that adherence to prescribed cut-off dates and procedural timelines is undeniably essential in public matters pertaining to public recruitment. The conditions embodied in the recruitment notices issued by the relevant authority are binding in character and are required to be applied uniformly to uphold the mandate of equality as enshrined under Articles 14 and 16 of the Constitution of India, 1950 [hereinafter referred to as 'Constitution']. However, strict compliance with timelines cannot be viewed in isolation from the equally important obligation of effective communication.

39. Therefore, in circumstances alike, the Courts, more often than not are called upon to strike a delicate and principled balance between



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two competing considerations, namely, the necessity of adhering to cut-off dates along with procedural requirements; and the consequences flowing from a delay or non-compliance with such requirements.

40. We deem it necessary to highlight that rejection of candidature for failure to complete documentation carries grave and often irreversible consequences, especially when the candidate has duly qualified the written examination. For many aspirants, a government job represents years of preparation, financial investment, and personal sacrifice. Thus, disqualification at the final stage, particularly on technical grounds, not only significantly impact the professional prospects but also the psychological and economic stability of the candidate. Therefore, such rejection must be exercised with caution and only after the authority reaches a firm and reasoned conclusion that, the requirement was clearly communicated; the mode of communication adopted was reliable and verifiable; a fair and reasonable opportunity was afforded to the candidate to comply with prescribed norms and no administrative lapse acted as a contributory to the alleged non-compliance.

41. The principle of fairness demands that procedural rigidity must not defeat substantive justice. While this Court, is conscious that it cannot ordinarily interfere with recruitment processes or relax cut-off dates indiscriminately, nevertheless, we are duty-bound to intervene where denial of opportunity results from administrative inadequacy rather than candidate negligence. Ultimately, public recruitment which provides adherence to a particular timeline, the decision taken by the



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recruitment body must reflect both efficiency and equity. In essence, while procedural rigor safeguards administrative order, fairness in communication safeguards justice. A recruitment process that harmonizes both principles, not only withstands judicial scrutiny but also uphold the constitutional mandate of equality and fairness in public employment.

42. Having delineated the governing legal principles, this Court shall now advert to the facts of each petition individually.

43. In W.P. (C) 938/2026, the Tribunal by way of the IO-1 allowed the OA filed by the private party, *inter alia* holding that he became aware of the cancellation of his candidature only upon receipt of the rejection notice. However, the Government before this Court has placed on record the status extracted from the OARS portal, which indicates that an SMS as well as an email were sent to the private party on 26.09.2019, intimating him to upload his e-dossier within the stipulated period, namely from 27.09.2019 to 11.10.2019. The mobile number and email ID recorded therein have not been disputed by the private party.

44. In the absence of any challenge to the correctness of the contact details or the authenticity of the portal record, a presumption of due intimation arises. The material on record thus establishes compliance with the prescribed modes of communication. Accordingly, the present petition is allowed.

45. In W.P. (C) 14309/2025, the Tribunal by way of IO-2 allowed the OA filed by the private party, primarily on the ground that the



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email ID of the applicant was erroneous and, therefore, effective communication regarding the requirement to upload the e-dossier was not established. However, the Government before this Court has placed on record the status extract from the OARS portal, which reflects that SMS as well as email was sent to the private party on 27.09.2018 and 17.09.2018 respectively, thereby requiring her to upload the e-dossier within the stipulated window from 19.09.2018 to 28.09.2018. The said record indicates that intimation was generated prior to and during the operative period for submission.

46. Significantly, the private party has not disputed the correctness of the mobile number or email address reflected in the OARS portal, nor has any material been placed to substantiate the plea of an erroneous email ID. In the absence of such dispute, the contemporaneous electronic record cannot be brushed aside. Accordingly, the present petition is allowed.

47. In W.P.(C) 553/2019, the Tribunal by way of IO-3 allowed the OA filed by the private party. The Government before this Court has stated that a SMS was sent to the private party on 18.08.2017 intimating her that the last date for uploading the e-dossier had been extended till 25.08.2017. The record indicates that the initial window for submission was from 28.07.2017 to 10.08.2017, which was thereafter extended up to 16.08.2017 and finally up to 25.08.2017.

48. However, the SMS relied upon by the Government was dispatched only on 18.08.2017, i.e., after expiry of the earlier revised cut-off and at a stage when the extended period was already substantially underway. Consequently, the private party was



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effectively left with a truncated window of approximately nine days to comply, as against the twenty-nine days available to other shortlisted candidates from the inception of the process. Such belated intimation defeats the object of prescribing a reasonable time window to enable candidates to collect and upload requisite documents. In these circumstances, the plea of due communication cannot be accepted as compliance in parity with other candidates. Accordingly, the present petition is dismissed.

49. In W.P.(C) 8979/2019, the Tribunal by way of the IO-4 issued an interim direction for consideration of the candidature of the private party. The Tribunal took note of the fact that the Result Notice dated 13.01.2019 erroneously referred to the post of PGT (English), whereas the result in question pertained to TGT (English). This error was admittedly rectified only on 08.02.2019, without any corresponding modification of the stipulated window for uploading the e-dossier, namely 04.02.2019 to 13.02.2019.

50. The Government before this Court has placed reliance upon an undertaking stating that no failure of delivery of email was recorded during the prescribed period in respect of the private party's email ID. However, the undertaking neither specifies the precise date on which the communication was effected nor clarifies whether such intimation preceded or followed the rectification of the erroneous Result Notice.

51. In view of the foregoing, this Court is not inclined to allow the present petition for two reasons. *Firstly*, the rectification of the foundational error in the Result Notice occurred five days after commencement of the e-dossier upload window, thereby materially



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truncating the effective opportunity available to the private party. *Secondly*, the undertaking is general in nature and does not conclusively establish timely and meaningful communication prior to, or contemporaneous with, the corrected notice. The absence of clarity as to the timing of intimation, coupled with the admitted error in the Result Notice, creates an element of uncertainty not attributable to the candidate. In these circumstances, the present petition is dismissed.

52. In W.P.(C) 10565/2019, the Tribunal by way of the IO-5, issued an interim direction for consideration of the candidature of the private party. The Tribunal noted that the advertisement, at its inception, contemplated submission of hard copies of documents and did not expressly stipulate the requirement of uploading the same through an e-dossier mechanism.

53. The Government in its counter affidavit filed before the Tribunal stated that that shortlisted candidates were intimated through SMS at regular intervals. However, the report subsequently placed before this Court merely states that no failure of delivery of email was recorded during the prescribed period in respect of the private party's email ID. The undertaking does not disclose the precise date or time at which the alleged communication was effected, nor does it establish that such intimation was made in a manner affording the private party a fair and effective opportunity within the prescribed window.

54. The absence of specific particulars regarding the timing of communication, coupled with the initial ambiguity in the advertisement regarding the mode of submission, lends credence to the Tribunal's *prima facie* view that the private party ought not to be



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non-suited at that stage. The material placed before this Court does not dislodge the basis of the interim protection granted. Accordingly, the present petition is dismissed.

55. In W.P.(C) 10837/2019, the Tribunal by way of IO-6 summarily dealt with the argument made by the private party, thereby allowing the OA. However, the Government before this Court has placed reliance upon the OARS portal status indicating intimation for uploading the e-dossier, along with a report stating that no failure of delivery of email was recorded during the prescribed period in respect of the private party's email ID. However, the said report does not disclose the specific date or time at which the communication was effected. It merely indicates that the communication fell within the overall time window prescribed for uploading the e-dossier.

56. In the absence of clear material demonstrating that the intimation was made at the inception of the window, thereby affording the private party a fair and effective opportunity equivalent to other shortlisted candidates, the possibility of a truncated or delayed communication cannot be ruled out. Such ambiguity, particularly in a time-bound recruitment process, cannot operate to the detriment of the candidate. Accordingly, the present petition is dismissed.

57. In W.P.(C) 11348/2019, the Tribunal by way of IO-7, while noting that the private party did not receive any SMS intimation regarding the uploading of the e-dossier, allowed the OA. The Government before this Court has not placed any material on record to demonstrate that either SMS or email was sent to the private party. In the absence of such proof, it cannot be presumed that the private party



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was effectively informed within the prescribed time. Accordingly, the present petition is dismissed.

58. In W.P.(C) 10765/2019, the Tribunal by way of IO-8 summarily allowed the OA filed by the private party. The Government before this Court has relied upon the OARS portal status indicating intimation for uploading the e-dossier, along with a report stating that no failure of delivery of email was recorded in respect of the private party's email ID during the prescribed period. However, the report does not specify the exact date or time when the communication was effected and only indicates the overall time window for submission.

59. In the absence of material establishing that the private party was effectively informed at the inception of the prescribed period, a disparity *vis-à-vis* other shortlisted candidates cannot be ruled out. Accordingly, the present petition is dismissed.

60. In W.P.(C) 11793/2019, the Tribunal by way of IO-9, allowed the OA filed by the private party, while noting that the Government had failed to intimate her regarding the uploading of the e-dossier in accordance with the prescribed recruitment procedure. The Government before this Court has submitted that the private party was intimated by way of SMS. However, a perusal of the Order dated 16.12.2021 passed by this Court, reveals that the Government failed to file any affidavit as directed by this Court *vide* order dated 12.11.2021 to substantiate such intimation. In the absence of evidence demonstrating effective communication, the present petition is dismissed.



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61. In W.P.(C) 11997/2019, the Tribunal by way of IO-10, summarily allowed the OA filed by the private party. The Government before this Court has failed to produce any material to demonstrate that intimation, either via SMS or email, was sent to the private party. In the absence of such proof, it cannot be held that the private party was effectively informed within the prescribed timeline. Accordingly, the present petition is dismissed.

62. Similarly, in W.P.(C) 13224/2019, the Government before this Court has failed to produce any material to demonstrate that intimation, either via SMS or email, was sent to the private party. Accordingly, the present petition is dismissed.

63. In W.P.(C) 506/2023, the Tribunal by way of IO-12, dismissed the OA filed by the private party on account of delay in filing the requisite documents. The Government before this Court has produced an email indicating that an SMS was sent to the private party on 28.04.2017, directing her to upload the e-dossier by 12.05.2017, thereby implying that intimation was being made *via* SMS to the selected candidates. However, the said email does not specify the phone number to which the SMS was sent, and no further supporting material has been filed to substantiate effective communication. In view of the foregoing, the purported intimation cannot be relied upon. Accordingly, the present petition is allowed.

64. In W.P.(C) 10949/2023, the Tribunal by way of IO-13, allowed the OA filed by the private party, observing that she did not receive any intimation, and that procedural technicalities should not defeat the substantive rights of a candidate. The Government before this Court



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has contended that bulk SMS and emails were sent to candidates on 13.07.2020 and 06.07.2020, respectively. However, no documentary proof has been filed to substantiate this claim. In the absence of credible evidence of intimation, the present petition is dismissed.

65. In W.P.(C) 11351/2023, the Tribunal by way of IO-14, allowed the OA filed by the private party, taking into account the failure of the Government to send any intimation regarding the upload of the e-dossier and the fact that she was pregnant. The Government before this Court contended that an SMS was sent to the private party intimating her of the prescribed time period for uploading the e-dossier. However, no documentary evidence has been filed to substantiate this assertion. In the absence of credible proof of intimation, the present petition is dismissed.

66. In W.P.(C) 15993/2023, the Tribunal by way of IO-15, allowed the OA filed by the private party, noting the failure of the Government to intimate her regarding the upload of the e-dossier. A perusal of the record filed before the Tribunal shows that the private party received an email dated 02.04.2019, which was well after the prescribed period of 23.01.2019 to 01.02.2019. Further, the Orders of this Court dated 22.01.2024 and 08.10.2025 indicate that the Government was unable to produce any documentary evidence showing that the private party was aware of the requirement to upload the e-dossier within the prescribed time. In view of the Government's inability to substantiate timely intimation, the present petition is dismissed.

67. In W.P.(C) 12996/2024, the Tribunal by way of IO-16, allowed the OA filed by the private party, holding it to be identical to **O.A.**



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No.1923/2019 captioned **Poonam v. DSSSB & Anr.**, thereby adopting the reasoning therein. With regard to the present case, it may be noted that the prescribed period to upload e-dossier was from 27.04.2017 to 12.05.2017, whereas the Government before this Court has produced the status from the OARS portal, indicating that an SMS was sent to the private party on 28.04.2017, directing her to upload the e-dossier before 12.05.2017. However, taking the document on its face value, and in light of the fact that the private party was duly intimated on the very next date following the commencement of the prescribed period, coupled with no dispute raised by the private party regarding the phone number mentioned in the document, the present petition is allowed.

68. In W.P.(C) 15703/2024, the Tribunal by way of IO-17, allowed the OA filed by the private party while classifying the said OA to be identical to **Poonam (Supra)**, thereby adopting its reasoning. The Government before this Court has produced the status from the OARS portal, thereby indicating that an SMS dated 18.08.2017 was sent to the private party, to upload her e-dossier before 25.08.2017.

69. In this regard, it is noted that the first cut-off period stipulated by the Government was 21.07.2017 to 31.07.2017, which was further extended upto 25.08.2017, however, the SMS was merely sent to the private party after the passage of the prior cut-off date, thereby denying the equitable time to the private party in parity with the other selected candidates. In this regard, it becomes pertinent to note that a time of only 8 days was given to the private party for filing of the relevant documents by way of the e-dossier, as against the 36 days



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given to the other selected candidates, thereby enabling them to collect their documents and accordingly upload them on the website.

70. However, such delayed intimation not only fails to highlight the bona fide of the Government but also defeats the very purpose of providing a window of certain days for the convenience of the candidate. Accordingly, the present petition is dismissed.

71. In W.P.(C) 3625/2025, the tribunal by way of IO-18, allowed the OA filed by the private party while classifying the said OA to be identical to **Poonam** (*Supra*), thereby adopting its reasoning. The Government before this Court has argued that an SMS was sent to the private party, intimating her about the prescribed time period for uploading the e-dossier; however, no document substantiating the said argument has been produced before this Court. Accordingly, the present petition is dismissed.

72. In W.P.(C) 19763/2025, the Tribunal by way of IO-19, allowed the OA filed by the private parties, while observing that the Government failed to abide by the terms of its own advertisement, thereby failing to intimate them regarding the uploading of the e-dossier through any electronic mode. The Government before this Court, has failed to bring on record any document to highlight that the requisite intimation was indeed sent to the private party. Accordingly, the present petition is dismissed.

73. In W.P.(C) 9718/2019, the Tribunal by way of IO-20, while taking note that the candidate was visually handicapped and had received incorrect information regarding submission of the e-dossier,



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allowed the OA filed thereof. The Government before this Court has filed a report stating that no failure of email delivery was recorded for the private party's email during the prescribed period. However, the report does not specify the date on which the communication was effected but merely identifies the prescribed time window. In the absence of material establishing that the private party was effectively informed at the inception of the prescribed period, a disparity *vis-à-vis* other shortlisted candidates cannot be ruled out. In view of the foregoing, the present petition is dismissed.

74. In W.P.(C) 12220/2025, the Tribunal by way of IO-21, relying on the judgment of **Poonam** (*Supra*) allowed the OA filed by the private party. The Government has failed to bring on record any document to highlight that the requisite intimation was indeed sent to the private party. Accordingly, the present petition is dismissed.

CONCLUSION:

75. In view of the foregoing discussions, the W.P. (C) 938/2026, W.P. (C) 14309/2025, W.P.(C) 506/2023 and W.P.(C) 12996/2024 are allowed.

76. Whereas W.P.(C) 553/2019, W.P.(C) 8979/2019, W.P.(C) 10565/2019, W.P.(C) 10837/2019, W.P.(C) 11348/2019, W.P.(C) 10765/2019, W.P.(C) 11793/2019, W.P.(C) 11997/2019, W.P.(C) 13224/2019, W.P.(C) 10949/2023, W.P.(C) 11351/2023, W.P.(C) 15993/2023, W.P.(C) 15703/2024, W.P.(C) 3625/2025, W.P.(C) 19763/2025, W.P.(C) 9718/2019 and W.P.(C) 12220/2025 are dismissed.



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77. All the pending applications shall stand closed.

ANIL KSHETARPAL, J.

AMIT MAHAJAN, J.

MARCH 20, 2026

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