

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JHARKHAND AT RANCHI
W.P.(S) No. 2934 of 2026

Arpana Kumari & Others	....	....	Petitioners
Versus			
The State of Jharkhand & Others	....	....	Respondents
With			
W.P.(S) No. 3401 of 2026			
Prabha Suri & Others	....	....	Petitioners
Versus			
The State of Jharkhand & Others	....	....	Respondents
With			
W.P.(S) No. 3441 of 2026			
Jyoti Kumari & Others	....	....	Petitioners
Versus			
The State of Jharkhand & Others	....	....	Respondents
With			
W.P.(S) No. 3442 of 2026			
Simran Choudhary & Others	....	....	Petitioners
Versus			
The State of Jharkhand & Others	....	....	Respondents

CORAM : HON'BLE THE CHIEF JUSTICE
HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE RAJESH SHANKAR

For the Petitioners	:	Mr Rupesh Singh, Advocate Mr Chanchal Jain, Advocate Mr Abhijeet Indra Guru, Advocate Mr Abhishek Kumar, Advocate Mr Sunil Kumar Mahto, Advocate Mr Vishal Kumar, Advocate Mr Shubham Mishra, Advocate Mr Gyandev Raj, Advocate Mr Kazi Asif Iqubal, Advocate
For the Respondents	:	Mr Rajiv Ranjan, Advocate General Mr Sanjoy Piprawall, Advocate Mr Piyush Chitresh, AC to AG

04 /Dated: 07.05.2026

1. Heard the learned counsel for the petitioners and the learned Advocate General, who appears with Mr. Sanjoy Piprawall and Mr. Piyush Chitresh for the respondents.
2. In W.P.(S) No. 2934 of 2026, we allow I.A. No. 5837 of 2026 seeking leave to amend the petition.
3. The above leave is granted without prejudice to the objections raised on behalf of the respondents. Such objections may be considered even

after the amendment is allowed, as they primarily concern the merits of the matter.

4. The amendment is to be carried out forthwith. In addition, an amended copy of the petition must be filed and served upon the learned counsel for the respondents within the next seven days.

5. I.A. No. 5837 of 2026 is disposed of.

6. The reliefs that the petitioners in W.P.(S) No. 2934 of 2026 now seek by way of amendment have already been sought by the petitioners in the remaining three petitions.

7. Some of the learned counsel for the petitioners began by stating that the petitioners they represent are not hesitant to appear for the examination scheduled to commence tomorrow, i.e., the 8th and 9th of May 2026. However, by way of submission, it was clarified that insisting that only 2,819 candidates appear for those re-examinations, rather than all 24,000 who appeared for the original examination, is unfair.

8. Learned counsel for the petitioners first argued that there was no material on record to suggest any suspicious activity concerning them, and second, that there was no basis for singling out the 2,819 candidates. They pointed out that there is no tangible evidence on record to support the respondents' decision to hold a re-examination for these specific candidates. Accordingly, they submitted that the court should stay the re-examination scheduled for the 8th and 9th of May 2026.

9. The learned Advocate General pointed out that each of the 24,000 candidates who appeared for the examination was assigned a terminal number associated with a unique IP address. During the examination,

however, it was discovered that 2,819 candidates had a mismatch between their terminal numbers and IP addresses.

10. The learned Advocate General submitted that the terminal numbers assigned to these candidates were accessed via an external source with IP addresses different from the unique IP address assigned to each candidate or terminal. He submitted that, based on the report of the specialised agency conducting the examination, a decision was taken to hold a re-examination for these 2,819 candidates, as they had been identified and segregation was possible.

11. Learned Advocate General submitted that in fact, a lenient view was taken in this matter, and these candidates were only directed, or rather, allowed to appear for the re-examination now scheduled on 8th and 9th of May 2026. He submitted that there is nothing arbitrary or unreasonable in the respondents' approach.

12. In this case, we have considered the rival contentions with a view to deciding whether any case is made out for granting interim relief to the petitioners. However, we are not satisfied that the petitioners have made out any prima facie case for staying or stalling the re-examination, much less directing a re-examination for all 24000 candidates.

13. At this stage, we cannot say that there was no prima facie material before the authorities to order the re-examination involving 2819 candidates, including the petitioners or that the balance of convenience supports the grant of any such interim relief to the petitioners.

14. Postponing the re-examination at the behest of about 40–50 petitioners would severely prejudice the remaining candidates, who may be ready and willing to appear for the re-examination. The learned Advocate

General pointed out that most candidates have already downloaded their admit cards to appear; indeed, some of those candidates are parties to these petitions.

15. The contention that the examination of all 24,000 candidates should have been cancelled cannot be *prima facie* accepted. This is because the learned Advocate General pointed out that, in this case, there was a clear mismatch in the unique IP addresses, suggesting that an external source had hacked the system specifically in relation to these 2,819 candidates.

16. In this regard, reliance can be placed on the judgment of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in the case of ***Vanshika Yadav v. Union of India, reported in (2024) 9 SCC 743***, wherein the Hon'ble Supreme Court observed that *a holistic view must be adopted by assessing the extent of unfair means used and whether it is possible to separate the tainted candidates from the untainted ones. The court must ensure that allegations of malpractice are substantiated and that the material on record, including investigative reports, supports this conclusion. There must be at least some evidence for the court to reach such a conclusion. However, the standard of evidence need not be unduly strict. Specifically, the material on record need not point to a single, definitive conclusion that malpractice occurred at a systemic level. Nevertheless, there must be a real possibility of systemic malaise, as reflected in the material before the court.*

17. Moreover, recently the Hon'ble Supreme again in the dictum of **State of West Bengal vs Baishaki Bhattacharyya and ors., reported in 2025 SCC OnLine SC 719**, held that *when an in-depth factual inquiry reveals systemic irregularities, such as malaise or fraud, that undermine the integrity of the entire selection process, the result should be cancelled in its*

entirety. However, if and when possible, segregation of tainted and untainted candidates should be done in consonance with fairness and equity.

18. Relying upon the above-mentioned precedents of the Hon'ble Supreme Court, this Court in **Prakash Kumar vs. The State of Jharkhand, W.P. (PIL) No. 5717 of 2024** and **Manish Kumar vs. The State of Jharkhand, W.P. (PIL) No. 1476 of 2025** addressed analogous claims of paper leaks regarding the Jharkhand General Graduate Level Combined Competitive Examination, 2023 (JGGLCCE-2023). By scrutinizing the investigative reports, this Court concluded that in the absence of evidence showing a pervasive or widespread fraud, the refusal to cancel the entire examination was justified. Since the tainted candidates were successfully identified and segregated, this Court held that it would be contrary to the principles of fairness and public interest to vitiate the entire selection process.

19. In the instant case, at least prima facie, the segregation of the 2819 candidates (including the present petitioners) from the rest of the 24,000 examinees was not only possible but also based on verifiable technical data. The mismatch between the unique terminal numbers and the external IP addresses provided a clear digital footprint that allowed the authorities to isolate instances in which the system's integrity may have been compromised by external hacking.

20. Consequently, at least prima facie, the decision to hold a re-examination for the identified candidates, rather than cancelling the entire process, aligns with the principles of fairness and equity established by the judgments of the Hon'ble Supreme Court. To stall this process now would

penalise most candidates against whom no such irregularities were found, thereby undermining the balance between maintaining examination standards and protecting the legitimate interests of untainted participants.

21. In any event, such relief is not clearly prayed for in these petitions. Furthermore, such relief, if granted, would affect all candidates, yet none have been joined as parties to these petitions, not even in a representative capacity.

22. Apart from the fact that no *prima-facie* case has been made out by any of the petitioners, the balance of convenience also weighs heavily against the grant of such interim relief. It remains open to the petitioners to download their admit cards and appear for the re-examination without prejudice or under protest.

23. Insistence that the results of their earlier examination should be declared or that the entire examination affecting almost 24000 candidates should be canceled, hardly appears to be some equitable insistence in the facts and circumstances of this case.

24. We also note that this Court, in W.P.(PIL) No. 2375 of 2024, was monitoring the timelines for the completion of the recruitment process, which included the expeditious conduct of the examinations. This PIL has already been disposed of, but the compliance remains to be considered. Any delay in the re-examination will further delay the recruitment process.

25. Therefore, after a cumulative consideration of all the above factors, we decline interim relief in these petitions. However, we clarify that if the petitioners have already downloaded their admit cards and wish to appear in the re-examination scheduled for the 8th and 9th of May 2026, they are at liberty to do so without prejudice to their rights and contentions in these

petitions. Since such a course was always open to the petitioners, there was no question of irreparable loss or prejudice.

26. We direct the respondents concerned to file affidavits by the 19th of June 2026, after serving an advance copy on the learned counsel for the petitioners. If the petitioners wish to file any rejoinder, they are granted liberty to do so by the 25th of June 2026. I.A.s if any, in these petitions seeking interim relief are disposed of.

27. We list these matters for further consideration on the 2nd of July 2026.

(M.S. Sonak, C.J.)

(Rajesh Shankar, J.)

May 07, 2026
Ranjeet / R.Kr.