

OD-1

IN THE HIGH COURT AT CALCUTTA
Constitutional Writ Jurisdiction
ORIGINAL SIDE

WPO/211/2026

SONALI KESHARWANI AND ORS.
VS
THE COAL INDIA LIMITED AND ORS.

BEFORE:

The Hon'ble JUSTICE AMRITA SINHA

Date : May 6, 2026.

Appearance:

Mr. Arjun Ray Mukherjee, Adv.
Ms. Debapriya Mitra, Adv.
...for the petitioners

Mr. Varun Kedia, Adv.
...for the respondents

1. The process of promotion/selection of departmental employees from the Non-Executive to the Executive Cadre initiated by Coal India Limited vide Notification No.02/2025 dated 25th February, 2025 is the subject matter of challenge in the instant writ petition.
2. The petitioners participated in the promotional process. They allege that the manner in which the promotional process has been conducted is contrary to the notification dated 25th February, 2025.
3. The employer has sought to change the rules of the game after the game had begun. The authority took a decision to disclose the mode of distribution of marks after the entire selection process was over.
4. Reliance has been placed on the HR Manual, as updated on 1st October, 2024, clearly mentioning that for the purpose of selection of departmental candidates against the Press Advertisement, the criteria stipulated in the Press Advertisement will be the guiding

factor. Whenever relaxation is required, it shall be with specific approval of the Chairman or any authority delegated with such powers.

5. It has been contended that in the Press Advertisement, there was no mention as regards the manner in which 10 (ten) marks are to be distributed. The same has been incorporated vide Notice no.18/2026 published by the Recruitment Division of the Coal India Limited on 27th March, 2026. New methodology for awarding marks has been adopted which is contrary to the Press Advertisement.
6. It has been submitted that the final answer key has not been uploaded within the time limit stipulated for the same. The list of candidates granted promotion does not contain the names of all the participants who participated in the promotional process.
7. It has been contended that the SOP regarding preparation of final merit list and the requirement of making two lists containing 'eligible' and 'non-eligible' candidates with reasons of non-eligibility and publishing the same within 10 (ten) working days after scrutiny by the Scrutiny Department has also not been followed.
8. It has been submitted that during pendency of the writ petition, the authority published a list of candidates for promotion/selection on 5th May, 2026. Prayer has been made to direct the respondents to maintain *status quo* as regards the promotional process.
9. Learned advocate representing the Coal India Limited opposes the submission and prayer of the petitioners. It has been submitted

that the promotional process was conducted by maintaining absolute transparency and fairness. All the notifications and the Rules relied upon by the authority are well within the knowledge of the candidates who participated in the promotional examination as they all are departmental candidates.

10. It has been denied that rules of the game have been changed as alleged or at all. It has been submitted that in view of the Model Code of Conduct which was prevailing in the State due to the West Bengal Legislative Election, the list of selected candidates for promotion could not be published. Immediately on 5th May, 2026, after the Model Code of Conduct was lifted, the list has been published.
11. Upon hearing the submissions made on behalf of both the parties and on perusal of the documents placed before this Court, the Court is of the opinion that the matter is required to be adjudicated upon granting the respondents an opportunity to file its opposition.
12. The respondents are, accordingly, directed to file affidavit-in-opposition within a period of six weeks from date; reply, if any, within a fortnight thereafter. Liberty to mention the matter for hearing immediately after completion of the aforesaid time period.
13. It is ordered that any steps taken in connection with Notification no. 02/2025 dated 25th February, 2025 shall abide by the result of the writ petition.

14. All parties are to act on the server copy of this order duly downloaded from the official website of this Court.
15. Certified copy of this order, if applied for, shall be made available to the parties.

(AMRITA SINHA, J.)

kc