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

\+ W.P.(C) 717/2026, CM APPL. 3456/2026 & CM APPL. 3457/2026

KUSHAGRA SHARMA AND ORS. .....Petitioners

Through: Mr. Sanjoy Ghose, Senior Advocate with Mr. Abhinav Hansaraman, Mr. Rohan Mandal, Advocates.

versus

UNION OF INDIA & ANR. .....Respondents

Through: Mr. Balendu Shekhar, CGSC with Mr. Rajkumar Maurya, Mr. Krishna Chaitanya, Mr. Divyansh Singh, Advocates.

CORAM:
HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE SANJEEV NARULA

O R D E R

% 17.01.2026

1. This writ petition arises from the re-examination of the SSC Combined Graduate Level Examination 2025 (Tier-I), held on 14th October, 2025, for recruitment to 14,582 vacancies across Group "B" and Group "C" posts (Pay Levels 4 to 7). The immediate grievance is directed against the notification/corrigendum dated 14th January, 2026 issued by the Department of Personnel and Training ('DoPT'), Staff Selection Commission relating to the normalization methodology adopted for candidates rescheduled to the re-examination.

2. Mr. Sanjoy Ghose, Senior Counsel for the Petitioners, at the outset, fairly states that the challenge would ordinarily lie before the Central

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Administrative Tribunal ('CAT'). He, however, submits that the Tribunal is not sitting today and the Tier-II examination is scheduled on 18th January, 2026 and 19th January, 2026. In that backdrop, a limited *ad interim* arrangement is sought to protect the Petitioners from being shut out of the Tier-II examination, on parity with the interim order passed by the CAT in O.A./140/2026 (Delhi), where similarly situated applicants have been permitted to provisionally participate, with their results directed to be kept in sealed cover.

3. Issue notice. Mr. Balendu Shekhar, CGSC, accepts notice on behalf of the Respondents. He submits that he has received a copy of the petition shortly before the hearing and has not yet received complete instructions. He also raises an objection on jurisdiction, contending that the present dispute lies within the exclusive domain of the CAT at the first instance.

4. The Court has considered the submissions. The jurisdictional objection is noted. It is equally material that the Tier-II examination is scheduled imminently on 18th January, 2026 and 19th January, 2026, and the Petitioners seek only a protective order for a short interregnum, coupled with an undertaking to approach the CAT. In service and recruitment matters, while the High Court ordinarily expects parties to avail the statutory forum, *ad interim* arrangements are not unknown where refusal to intervene would render the approaching of the competent forum illusory by reason of the immediacy of events. This Court, therefore, proposes to pass a narrowly tailored order, without expressing any opinion on the merits of the challenge.

5. The Petitioners state that they stand on the same footing as the applicants in O.A./140/2026 (Delhi) and seek parity in the interim

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protection, subject to filing an O.A. before the CAT within a short period. The order of the Tribunal, as relied upon by the Petitioners, reads as under:

> *" **Order of The Tribunal***
>
> *1. Learned Sr. advocate appearing on behalf of the applicants presses for grant of urgent interim relief as set forth in para 9 of the O.A. The same is reproduced herein below:-*
> *"(a) Stay the results of the Tier-I SSC CGLE 2025.*
> *(b) Permit the Petitioners to appear in Tier II of SSC CGLE 2025, subject to outcome of the instant petition; and*
> *(c) Stay the effect of the clause 4 of the impugned notification dated 14.01.2026 (d) Any other order that this Hon'ble Tribunal may deem fit and proper in the facts of the case".*
> *2. Highlighting the facts of the present matter, learned counsel for the applicants states that the exam of Tier-II exam of Combine Graduate Level Examination- 2025 (CGLE) is scheduled to be held on 18.01.2026 and therefore the applicants may permitted to participate in the selection process.*
> *3. He draws attention to score obtained by one of the applicant namely Mr. Rishu Ranjan in the CGLE-2025 and states that the raw score is 136 and the normalized score is 128.03982. He further draws attention to the score of another applicant namely Sh. Samandeep Singh Tomar who had the raw score of 136 and the normalized score obtained by him is 135.89339.*
> *4. He also draws attention to the fact that a corrigendum has been issued by the Department of Personnel and Training on 14.01.2026, the subject is declaration of Results of Combined Graduate Level Examination (Tier-I), 2025, as per para 4 of the corrigendum is in respect of normalization process in respect of the candidates who have been rescheduled to take the CGLE 2025 Tier-I exam on 14th October, 2025. On the recommendations of the Committee of Experts constituted for the purpose, they have been clubbed with their original shifts and their marks have been normalized accordingly. 5. He would submit that the raw score of the previous exam has been clubbed, where the applicants were disqualified and in the process of reexamination in which the applicants had appeared, he would submit that such a normalization clubbing with the old exam cannot be done in a manner, which has been dealt by the respondents, more particularly when the exam was cancelled. The normalization should have been carried out in the re-examination and should not be connected in any manner with the previous exam which was already cancelled by the respondents themselves.*
> *6. Learned counsel for the respondents who appears on advance service seeks time to take instruction on the interim prayer of the*

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applicant.
7. However, we find substance in the submissions made by the learned Sr. counsel appearing on behalf of the applicant.
8. Since the Tier-II examination of Combined Graduate Level Examination is scheduled to be held on 18.01.2026, we allow the applicants herein to provisionally participate in the selection process.
9. We make it clear that provisionally allowing the applicants herein to participate in the examination shall not give any indefeasible or vested right to the applicants to claim appointment to the post, nor does it create any legal entitlement in the favour for such appointment, which will be subject to outcome of the present O.A.
10. It is also made clear that the result of the applicants shall be kept in a sealed cover and shall not be opened without leave of the Court.
11. Liberty is granted to the respective parties to move appropriate application for seeking variation or modification of the order passed today, if so required in accordance with law.
12. The order is passed in open Court in presence of the learned counsel for the respective parties, and therefore there should not be any impediment not to allow the present applicants to participate in the CGLE (Tier-II) Examination, 2025.
13. Issue notice to the respondents.
14. Mr. B L Wanchoo with Mr. G D Chawla, learned counsel appears and accepts notice on behalf of the respondents.
15. He seeks and is allowed four weeks' time to file reply. Rejoinder, if any, may be filed within two weeks thereafter.
16. Re-List on 09.04.2026."

6. Accordingly, and only as an *ad interim* protective arrangement, the Petitioners are permitted to provisionally participate in the SSC CGLE, 2025 (Tier-II) examination scheduled on 18th January, 2026 and 19th January, 2026, subject to verification by the Respondents that the Petitioners are otherwise eligible to take the Tier-II examination.

7. It is clarified that this provisional permission:

(i) creates no vested or indefeasible right in favour of the Petitioners to claim selection or appointment;

(ii) shall remain subject to the outcome of the Original Application to be filed before the CAT and the orders to be passed therein; and

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(iii) shall not operate as an expression on the correctness of the impugned notification/corrigendum dated 14th January, 2026 or the normalization methodology.

8. The Respondents shall ensure that the Petitioners are not prevented from appearing in the Tier-II examination solely on account of the dispute raised in the present petition. The results of the Petitioners, however, shall be withheld and kept in sealed cover. The sealed cover shall not be opened, and the results shall not be acted upon without leave of the CAT which ultimately adjudicates the matter.

9. Mr. Ghose, on instructions, states that an O.A. shall be filed before the CAT within one week from today, subject to listing. The undertaking is taken on record. It is clarified that if the Petitioners do not institute proceedings before the CAT within the aforesaid time, this *ad interim* arrangement shall be liable to be recalled on an appropriate application. The Tribunal shall consider the O.A. and the request for interim relief on its own merits, uninfluenced by any observations made in the present order. Nothing stated herein shall be construed as an expression on maintainability or on the merits of the challenge. This *ad interim* arrangement shall operate only till the Tribunal takes up the O.A. and considers the request for interim relief. Upon such consideration, the Tribunal shall be at liberty to affirm, vary, modify, extend or recall this interim arrangement, as it may deem fit, in accordance with law.

10. Liberty is granted to the parties to move appropriate applications seeking variation, modification or recall of this order, in accordance with law, including on the ground that the Petitioners are not similarly situated, or that any statement made on instructions is found to be incorrect.

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11. The petition is disposed of in the above terms, along with the pending application(s), if any.

12. *Dasti*.

SANJEEV NARULA, J

JANUARY 17, 2026/ab

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