IN THE HIGH COURT FOR THE STATE OF TELANGANA
AT HYDERABAD

TUESDAY, THE EIGHTH DAY OF SEPTEMBER
TWO THOUSAND AND TWENTY SIX

PRESENT

THE HONOURABLE THE CHIEF JUSTICE SRI APARESH KUMAR SINGH
AND
THE HONOURABLE SRI JUSTICE G.M. MOHIUDDIN

I.A.NO. 1 OF 2026
IN/AND
WRIT APPEAL NO: 776 OF 2026

Writ Appeal under clause 15 of the Letters Patent Appeal Preferred Against Order Dated 17/06/2025 in WP No 22390 of 2020 on the file of the High Court.

Between:

1. The State of Telangana, Rep. by its Principal Secretary, Revenue Department, Secretariat, Hyderabad.
2. The District Collector, Rangareddy District at Lakdikapool, Hyderabad.
3. The Revenue Divisional Officer, Rajendranagar Division, Rangareddy District, at 51 Inner Ring Road, Sai Hills Colony, Hyderabad
4. The Tahsildar, ShamshabadMandal, Rangareddy District
5. The District Registrar, Rangareddy District
6. The Sub-Registrar, Shamshabad, Rangareddy District

...APPELLANTS /RESPONDENTS

AND

1. K. Manohar, S/o. K.Rama Swamy, aged about 62 years, Occ. Agriculture, R/o. Padra Village, Amrabad Mandal, Mahaboobnagar District
2. B. Ravi Kumar, S/o.B.Annadanappa, aged about 56 years, Occ.Business, R/o. Plot No.159, MCH 210, Road No.4, Alkapuri Colony, Saroornagar, Hyderabad
3. M.V.Narender, S/o.Chidambaram, aged about 52 years, Occ. Business, R/o.17-1-382/B/15, Bhanu Nagar, Champapet,Hyderabad.
4. Sandhya Shrikotala, ,W/o.SatishKotala, aged about 44 years, Occ. Employee, R/o. 16-10-261/2/1, Race Course Road, Malakpet, Hyderabad.
5. K.Rajender Prasad, S/o. Rama Swamy, aged about 56 years, Occ.Agriculture, R/o.Padra Village, Amrabad Mandal, Mahaboobnagar District
6. Ch. Anthaiah, S/o.Pentaiah, aged about 70 years, Occ.Agriculture, R/o.Plot No.200, Chaitanya Nagar, Ph-II, B.N. Reddy Nagar,Hyderabad
7. K.Bal Reddy, S/o.Janga Reddy, aged about 62 years, Occ.Agriculture,R/o.TandraVillage, Kalvakurthy Mandal, Mahaboobnagar District

8. T.Guru Murthy, S/o. Shivaiah, aged about 50 years, Occ. Business, R/o.Devarakonda Town and Mandal, Nalgonda District.

...RESPONDENTS/WRIT PETITIONERS

I.A. NO: 2 OF 2026

Petition under Section 151 CPC praying that in the circumstances stated in the affidavit filed in support of the petition, the High Court may be pleased to suspend the operation of the order dated. 17.06.2025 passed in W.P.No.22390 of 2020

I.A. NO: 1 OF 2026

Petition under Section 151 CPC praying that in the circumstances stated in the affidavit filed in support of the petition, the High Court may be pleased to condone the delay of (332)of days in filing the Writ Appeal against the order dated. 17.06.2025 passed in W.P.No.22390 of 2020

Counsel for the Appellant: SRI POTTIGARI SRIDHAR REDDY, SPECIAL GOVERNMENT PLEADER FOR THE ADVOCATE GENERAL

Counsel for the Respondents: SRI. KOPPULA GOPAL

The Court made the following: ORDER

IN THE HIGH COURT FOR THE STATE OF TELANGANA
AT HYDERABAD

THE HON'BLE THE CHIEF JUSTICE SRI APARESH KUMAR SINGH
AND
THE HON'BLE SRI JUSTICE G.M.MOHIUDDIN

I.A.No.1 of 2026
in/and
WRIT APPEAL No.776 of 2026

(CNR No. HBHC010475442026)

DATE: 08.09.2026

Between:

The State of Telangana, Rep. by its Principal Secretary, Revenue Department, Secretariat and others

....Appellants

And

K. Manohar and others **....Respondents**

COMMON JUDGMENT

Heard Sri Pottigari Sridhar Reddy, learned Special Government Pleader attached to the office of the learned Advocate General appearing for the appellants, Sri Koppula Gopal, learned counsel for the respondents and perused the record.

2. This Interlocutory Application *vide* I.A. No.1 of 2026, is filed by the appellants seeking condonation of delay of 332 days in preferring the accompanying writ appeal. The said writ appeal is directed against the order dated 17.06.2025 passed by the learned Single Judge in W.P.No.22390 of 2020, whereby the writ petition came to be

allowed and the appellants were directed to delete the subject land from the Prohibited Properties List under Section 22-A of the Registration Act, 1908 (for short '1908 Act'), and for issuance of new pattadar passbooks and title deeds.

3. Before entering upon the merits of the Writ Appeal, it is necessary to examine the issue of limitation, as the appeal is presented with a delay of 332 days. Such delay, being *prima facie* significant, calls for a careful consideration.

Factual matrix (in brief)

4. The respondents/writ petitioners claim title and possession over land admeasuring Ac.5-34 Gts. in Sy.No.117, situated at Sulthanpally Village, Shamshabad Mandal, Rangareddy District, and claim to have purchased the said property from Sri Yelkacherla Narsimha Reddy under Registered Sale Deed No.7313 of 2006 dated 29.05.2006. The record reflects that the vendor of the respondents/writ petitioners had earlier been issued pattadar passbooks and title deeds pursuant to Proceedings No.A/545/2005 dated 30.05.2005.

5. The background of the litigation is as follows:

i) Sri Yelkacherla Bal Reddy, father of the respondents' vendor Sri Yelkacheral Narasimha Reddy, instituted O.S.No.121 of 1976 against the Government seeking declaration of title in respect of lands in Sy.Nos.62 and 117 of Sulthanpally Village. By judgment and decree dated

08.10.1980, the trial Court decreed the suit in respect of Sy.No.117 and dismissed the claim concerning Sy.No.62. The matter was carried in A.S.No.101 of 1981, in which the appellate court modified the decree in respect of Sy.No.62 and confirmed the remainder. The proceedings are stated to have attained finality.

ii) Following the aforesaid proceedings, the name of the respondents' vendor, Sri Yelkacherla Narsimha Reddy, was mutated in the revenue records and pattadar passbooks and title deeds were issued *vide* Proceedings No.A/545/2005 dated 30.05.2005.

iii) After their purchase, the respondents submitted an application for mutation. The Tahsildar, however, treated the subject land as Government land and issued Memo No.D/1316/2006 dated 18.10.2006. The respondents challenged the said action before the appellant No.3-The Revenue Divisional Officer, Chevella Division, Ranga Reddy District. Pursuant to proceedings in C/4963/2008, the matter was remanded for fresh enquiry.

iv) During the pendency of the remanded proceedings, the subject land was included in the prohibited properties list under Section 22-A of the 1908 Act. The respondents consequently instituted W.P.No.28363 of 2013. By order dated 11.11.2013, this Court declared the inclusion of the

subject land in Section 22-A as illegal and directed the recording authority to mutate the respondents' names and issue pattadar passbooks and title deeds. The said order was not appealed against and thus, attained finality, as recorded in the subsequent proceedings.

v) Alleging non-compliance with the order dated 11.11.2013, the respondents instituted C.C.No.1856 of 2014. Thereafter, the Tahsildar passed Proceedings No.B/1/2013 dated 27.01.2015 mutating the respondents' names and issuing pattadar passbooks and title deeds. The contempt proceedings were subsequently closed on 30.01.2015.

vi) Subsequently, when the respondents sought issuance of new pattadar passbooks, the authorities again declined to de-notify the land from the Section 22-A prohibitory list on the ground that the land was classified as "Billa Dhakala" and vested in the Government. The respondents submitted a representation dated 21.12.2019 to the District Collector seeking deletion of the land from the prohibitory list. The District Collector rejected the request by endorsement No.E1/2600/2019 dated 12.10.2020.

vii) Aggrieved by the said endorsement, the respondents instituted W.P.No.22390 of 2020. By order dated 17.06.2025, the learned Single Judge allowed the writ petition, set aside the endorsement dated 12.10.2020,

directed issuance of new pattadar passbooks and title deeds, and further directed deletion of the subject land from the Section 22-A prohibited properties list.

6. Aggrieved by the said order dated 17.06.2025, the appellants have preferred the present writ appeal along with I.A.No.1 of 2026 seeking condonation of delay in filing the appeal.

Submissions on behalf of the appellants

7. Learned Special Government Pleader attached to the office of learned Advocate General appears for the appellants and, while seeking condonation of delay of 332 days in filing the writ appeal arising out of the order dated 17.06.2025 passed in W.P.No.22390 of 2020, advanced the following submissions:

i) That the delay occurred on account of the administrative process involved in taking a decision with regard to the filing of the appeal. The matter had to be processed through the offices of the Tahsildar, the Revenue Divisional Officer (RDO) and the District Collector, and thereafter through the Revenue (Assignment) Department of the Secretariat, for obtaining the necessary instructions and approvals.

ii) That a copy of the order under challenge was received in the office of the District Collector only on 13.02.2026. Thereafter, the matter was processed at the various administrative levels and the appeal papers were forwarded to the learned Advocate

General on 29.06.2026 for taking appropriate steps for filing the appeal.

iii) That the concerned officers were required to attend to several urgent Government programmes and priority public duties, including implementation of the "Praja Palana Pragati Pranalika", the "Indiramma Housing Scheme", works relating to the proposed Future City Commissionerate, conduct of elections to Gram Panchayats and Urban Local Bodies, land acquisition relating to the MUSI River Front Development Project, land acquisition relating to Roads Expansion and the Radial Road connecting Budwel to Nacharam, disposal of Bhu-Bharati grievances and work relating to the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls.

iv) That the delay was neither wilful nor wanton, nor was it occasioned with any intention to gain an unfair advantage. According to the appellants, the delay occurred *bona fide* on account of the administrative process and the circumstances set out above.

v) That they have a substantial and *bona fide* case on merits. In particular, it is their case that the subject land is recorded as "Billa Dhakala/Billadakla" (Government land) in the Khasra Pahani for the year 1954-55, and that the learned Single Judge failed to properly appreciate the said revenue record and erred in applying the principle of *res judicata*.

vi) That refusal to condone the delay would cause serious prejudice to the State, particularly in relation to the subject land which, according to the appellants, constitute Government land. The appellants therefore contend that the delay ought to be condoned so that the matter may be examined on its merits and the interests of the State and public property are adequately protected.

Submissions on behalf of the respondents

8. Learned counsel for the respondents opposed the application for condonation of delay and advanced the following submissions:

i) That the delay of 332 days in filing the appeal is inordinate and gross and has not been properly explained. The explanation given by the State is vague, general, and lacks specificity. Mere reference to terms such as "administrative process" or "other duties," without providing specific dates and details explaining how the delay occurred, is insufficient.

ii) That the appellants have failed to demonstrate "sufficient cause" for the condonation of the inordinate period of delay. The explanation does not satisfactorily account for the entire period of delay from 17.06.2025 to 15.07.2026.

iii) That the State Authorities, despite being aware of the urgency and the nature of the litigation, involving Government land and

contempt proceedings, did not act with reasonable diligence. The delay is indicative of negligence and a casual approach.

iv) That the limitation period for filing an appeal by the State is 30 days. The appellants have not offered any credible explanation for the delay beyond the prescribed period of limitation.

v) That the respondents, who are individual citizens, have been litigating since 2006 to assert their rights. They have been in possession of the land and have relied upon the decree passed by the civil court in support of their claim. Allowing the institution of the appeal at this belated stage, would cause grave injustice and prejudice to them.

vi) That the State cannot claim preferential treatment over a private litigant. The same law of limitation applies to the State as it does to private citizens. The State must act with reasonable diligence, especially when public property and revenue interests are involved.

9. We have taken note of the respective contentions urged and perused the material on record.

Consideration by this Court

10. The fundamental question that falls for consideration before this Court is whether the appellants have made out any "sufficient cause" for condoning the inordinate delay of 332 days in preferring

the present writ appeal against the order dated 17.06.2025 passed in W.P.No.22390 of 2020.

11. It is trite that though Courts are inclined to adopt a liberal and pragmatic approach in matters of condonation of delay, such discretion is not excessive. The party seeking condonation must demonstrate that the delay was neither intentional nor due to negligence, and must furnish a reasonable, cogent and satisfactory explanation covering the entire period of delay. The expression "sufficient cause" cannot be construed in a routine or mechanical manner.

12. It is pertinent to note that the law relating to condonation of delay, as interpreted by the Apex Court is well settled. In ***Collector, Land Acquisition, Anantnag v. Mst. Katiji***[1], the Hon'ble Supreme Court has held that the State as a litigant is entitled to be accorded the same treatment as any other litigant, and the law is required to be administered in an even-handed manner. There is, therefore, no warrant for according preferential treatment when the "State" is the applicant praying for condonation of delay.

13. The expression "sufficient cause" occurring in Section 5 of the Limitation Act is to receive a liberal construction so as to advance substantial justice. However, such discretion is not unfettered. The party seeking condonation must place before the Court a satisfactory

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[1] (1987) 2 SCC 107

and credible explanation for the delay and demonstrate that it acted with reasonable diligence. Where the delay is attributable to negligence, lack of *bona fides*, or unexplained inaction, the Court may decline to exercise its discretion in favour of condonation. The Court must ultimately be satisfied that sufficient cause prevented the party from filing the appeal within the prescribed period of limitation.

14. The Hon'ble Supreme Court in ***Esha Bhattacharjee v. Managing Committee of Raghunathpur Nafar Academy***[2], after examining a number of decisions on the meaning of "sufficient cause", has summarized the principles for condonation of delay as follows:

> *"21. From the aforesaid authorities the principles that can broadly be culled out are:*
>
> *21.1. (i) There should be a liberal, pragmatic, justice-oriented, non-pedantic approach while dealing with an application for condonation of delay, for the courts are not supposed to legalise injustice but are obliged to remove injustice.*
>
> *21.2. (ii) The terms "sufficient cause" should be understood in their proper spirit, philosophy and purpose regard being had to the fact that these terms are basically elastic and are to be applied in proper perspective to the obtaining fact-situation.*
>
> *21.3. (iii) Substantial justice being paramount and pivotal the technical considerations should not be given undue and uncalled for emphasis.*
>
> *21.4. (iv) No presumption can be attached to deliberate causation of delay but, gross negligence on the part of the counsel or litigant is to be taken note of.*
>
> *21.5. (v) Lack of bona fides imputable to a party seeking condonation of delay is a significant and relevant fact.*
>
> *21.6. (vi) It is to be kept in mind that adherence to strict proof should not affect public justice and cause public mischief because the courts are required to be vigilant so that in the ultimate eventuate there is no real failure of justice.*
>
> *21.7. (vii) The concept of liberal approach has to encapsulate the conception of reasonableness and it cannot be allowed a totally unfettered free play.*

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[2] (2013) 12 SCC 649

> *21.8. (viii) There is a distinction between inordinate delay and a delay of short duration or few days, for to the former doctrine of prejudice is attracted whereas to the latter it may not be attracted. That apart, the first one warrants strict approach whereas the second calls for a liberal delineation.*
>
> *21.9. (ix) The conduct, behaviour and attitude of a party relating to its inaction or negligence are relevant factors to be taken into consideration. It is so as the fundamental principle is that the courts are required to weigh the scale of balance of justice in respect of both parties and the said principle cannot be given a total go by in the name of liberal approach.*
>
> *21.10. (x) If the explanation offered is concocted or the grounds urged in the application are fanciful, the courts should be vigilant not to expose the other side unnecessarily to face such a litigation.*
>
> *21.11. (xi) It is to be borne in mind that no one gets away with fraud, misrepresentation or interpolation by taking recourse to the technicalities of law of limitation.*
>
> *21.12. (xii) The entire gamut of facts are to be carefully scrutinised and the approach should be based on the paradigm of judicial discretion which is founded on objective reasoning and not on individual perception.*
>
> *21.13. (xiii) The State or a public body or an entity representing a collective cause should be given some acceptable latitude...*
>
> *(Emphasis supplied)*

15. On a careful consideration of the material on record, we are of the considered view that the explanation offered by the appellants falls short of the legal requirement of "sufficient cause", for the following reasons:

i) The affidavit does not furnish sufficient particulars regarding the dates on which the file was moved, the authorities who dealt with it, or the specific steps taken at each stage. It merely states that the file moved between the Tahsildar's office, the office of the RDO, the office of the District Collector, and the Revenue (Assignment) Department of the Secretariat. There is no satisfactory account of the time consumed at each stage. In the

absence of such particulars, the explanation remains vague, general and insufficient.

ii) The appellants contend that a copy of the order was received in the District Collector's office on 13.02.2026 and that the matter was forwarded to the learned Advocate General on 29.06.2026. Even accepting these dates, the period between 17.06.2025, when the order was pronounced, and 13.02.2026 remains substantially unexplained. The affidavit does not satisfactorily explain why the order was received in the District Collector's office only on 13.02.2026 or what steps, if any, were taken during the intervening period to ascertain the status of the matter particularly after the matter was represented before the learned Single Judge by the learned Assistant Government Pleader for Revenue. Mere assertion of non-receipt of the order, without further explanation, cannot by itself constitute sufficient cause for the entire period.

iii) The explanation sought to be offered on the ground of administrative processing and obtaining approvals within the appellants cannot, by itself, constitute sufficient cause. It is well settled that internal procedural requirements or movement of files within a department are internal matters of the appellants and cannot be treated as a valid justification for condoning an inordinate delay, in the absence of a specific and satisfactory explanation for each stage. State is expected to act with due

promptitude and cannot claim any special indulgence in this regard. As held by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in ***Postmaster General v. Living Media India Ltd.***[3], delays attributed merely to impersonal administrative procedures, movement of files or bureaucratic processes cannot be accepted as sufficient cause. In the absence of a reasonable, satisfactory, and *bona fide* explanation for the delay, the routine plea of procedural red tape or pendency of files for prolonged periods does not merit acceptance.

iv) The explanation that the concerned officials were engaged in urgent Government programmes, election-related duties, land acquisition, and other administrative assignments does not, by itself, constitute sufficient cause for the entire period of delay. Government officials may undoubtedly be required to attend to several pressing responsibilities; however, the affidavit must still establish a reasonable and proximate connection between those duties and the delay in taking steps to prefer the appeal. The explanation offered does not adequately demonstrate such a connection for the entire period claimed.

v) The affidavit states that the order was received "only on 13.02.2026". While the date of receipt is relevant for explaining the subsequent administrative steps, it does not satisfactorily explain the substantial period between the date of the order and

[3] (2012) 3 SCC 563

the date of its receipt. The State, as a litigant, is also expected to maintain reasonable vigilance in respect of matters in which it is a party and to take timely steps where an adverse order is passed.

Conclusion

16. For the foregoing reasons, this Court is of the considered view that the appellants have failed to establish any "sufficient cause" for condonation of the inordinate and unexplained delay of 332 days in filing the writ appeal.

17. Accordingly, I.A.No.1 of 2026 is dismissed and consequently, the Writ Appeal is dismissed.

As a sequel, miscellaneous petitions, pending if any, stand closed. No costs.

SD/- NAYANI CHANDRA SEKHAR RAO
DEPUTY REGISTRAR

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SECTION OFFICER

To,

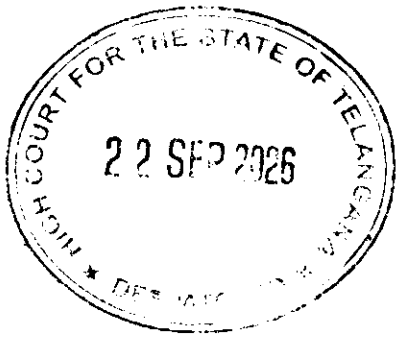
1. Two CCs to THE ADVOCATE GENERAL High Court for the State of Telangana, at Hyderabad [OUT]
2. One CC to SRI KOPPULA GOPAL Advocate [OPUC]
3. Two CD Copies

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HIGH COURT

HCJ
&
GMM, J

DATED: 08/09/2026



JUDGMENT

I.A. No. 1 OF 2026
IN/AND
WA.No.776 of 2026

I.A. NO. 1 OF 2026 IS DISMISSED AND DISMISSING THE WRIT APPEAL WITHOUT COSTS

(6) NP
17/9/26.