



2026:AHC:124975

HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT ALLAHABAD
MATTER UNDER ARTICLE 227 NO. 13425 OF 2025

Avnesh Kumar AgarwalPetitioners(s)

Versus

Union of India & 3 OrsRespondents(s)

Counsel for Petitioners(s)	: Pavan Kumar
Counsel for Respondent(s)	: A.S.G.I, G.A., Sanjay Dwivedi

In Chamber

AFR

Reserved on: 25.02.2026

Delivered on: 03.06.2026

HON'BLE VINOD DIWAKAR, J.

A. BRIEF HISTORY OF EARLIER PROCEEDINGS:

1. Heard Shri Pavan Kumar, learned counsel for the petitioner, Shri Manish Goel, learned Additional Advocate General assisted by Shri Roopak Chaubey, learned A.G.A.-I for the State-respondents, and perused the material available on record.

2. The instant petition has been preferred assailing the impugned order dated 20.09.2025 passed by the learned Additional Sessions Judge/Special Judge (Prevention of Corruption Act), Bareilly in Special Trial No.18 of 2025, whereby the petitioner's application- seeking a No Objection Certificate (hereinafter referred to as the 'NOC') for renewal of passport, was rejected.

3. Succinctly, the petitioner's case is that two First Information Reports ('FIRs') were registered against the petitioner; (i) FIR No.1634 of 2007, on 13.09.2007, under Sections 406, 420, 424, 467, 468, 471,

120-B and 218 of IPC, at Police Station- Najibabad, District- Bijnor; and (ii) FIR No.318 of 2007, under Sections 420, 406, 424, 467, 468, 471, 477, 218 and 120-B IPC, read with Section 13(1)(d) of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, at Police Station- Mandawali, District Bijnor. In both the FIRs, senior officers of the Commercial Tax Department, District Bijnor have been arrayed as accused, along with owners of a transport company and truck drivers, with the allegations of destruction of official records by setting the government office on fire by certain unknown miscreants, besides the allegation of corruption and forgery.

4. In brief, the facts narrated in FIR No.1634 of 2007 are that a Sub-Inspector posted at the Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of the Uttar Pradesh Police at Lucknow made a complaint arraying 25 persons as accused. Accused Nos.1 to 10 were the officers of the Trade Tax Department, whereas the remaining accused included drivers of trucks, traders and the owner of a transport company situated at Calcutta, Durgapur, Hazaribagh, Rishikesh and Muzaffarnagar. The allegations are that the officers of the Trade Tax Department, in collusion with businessmen, misused their official positions by giving undue benefits to traders through fabrication and creation of forged and fraudulent consignments, thereby causing heavy loss to the State treasury. Substantially similar allegations were also leveled against government officers and businessmen in FIR No.318 of 2007 registered at Police Station- Mandawali, District Bijnor.

5. It was further submitted that, in respect of FIR No.318 of 2007, the investigation had remained pending for nearly two decades, and with regard to FIR No.1634 of 2007, the charge-sheet was submitted only in the year 2024, and no effective orders have been passed therein. In view of the inordinate delay of 18 years in filing the charge-sheet and the fact that the petitioner was already on bail, the proceedings arising out of the FIR No.1634 of 2007 has been stayed by a Co-ordinate Bench of this Court vide order dated 21.11.2025. Relying upon the said order, learned counsel submitted that the Co-ordinate Bench after taking note of the

submission that; (i) the allegations in FIR No.1634 of 2007 are false and frivolous, and were leveled with an ulterior motive to harass the petitioner, (ii) the main allegations are against government officials, who had allowed loaded trucks to pass through the Sales Tax Post without depositing the requisite receipt, (iii) the petitioner is a businessman, (iv) the charge-sheet was filed after 18 years of the registration of the FIR, (v) there was no pre-summoning evidence on record regarding commission of any offence by the petitioner, stayed the proceedings against the petitioner. Accordingly, it was urged that the petitioner is entitled to issuance of the NOC, and that the rejection of his application was wholly erroneous.

6. *Per contra*, learned Additional Government Advocate for State invited the attention of the Court to the gravity of the allegations against the petitioner, submitting that the accusations are of a serious nature, including the allegation that the accused persons set the government office on fire with the intent to destroy official records.

7. During hearing of the case, this Court also noted that the Division Bench of this Court in *Manish Kumar Singh v. State of U.P. & Ors.*¹, had directed the State Government to constitute a High-Powered Committee to formulate guidelines for monitoring the investigation of the FIRs registered by the government departments in cases involving corruption and cheating, and had further directed that the investigations be completed expeditiously in a phased manner, besides issuing other directions.

8. Accordingly, the learned A.G.A. was directed to obtain specific instructions from the Office of the Chief Secretary, Government of Uttar Pradesh, regarding the status of compliance with the said directions, and to place the complete record along with all relevant documents/guidelines, if any, before this Court on the next date of hearing. Learned counsel for the Union of India was also granted liberty

¹ (2023) SCC OnLine All 2501

to obtain necessary instructions with respect to the reliefs sought in the present petition and to apprise the Court accordingly.

9. Time was sought and granted on two occasions to Shri Manish Goel, learned Additional Advocate General, to comply with the directions contained in the orders dated 03.12.2025 and 18.12.2025. It was also directed that an officer not below the rank of Secretary shall file an affidavit detailing the steps taken by the Office of the Chief Secretary, Government of Uttar Pradesh, in compliance with the directions issued in *Manish Kumar Singh (supra)*.

10. Thereafter, vide order dated 10.02.2026, this Court considered the affidavit filed on behalf of the State, which disclosed that pursuant to the order dated 29.11.2023 passed in *Manish Kumar Singh (supra)* by the Division Bench of this Court, a Committee had been constituted under the Chairmanship of the Chief Secretary, Government of Uttar Pradesh, vide order dated 10.12.2025. It was stated that the directions issued in *Manish Kumar Singh (supra)* have been complied with, may be after a delay of nearly two years, for reasons best known to the Department.

11. Accordingly, the Office of the Chief Secretary was directed to furnish the following details: (i) the original file relating to the constitution of the Committee, along with the file containing records of subsequent proceedings, to be produced before this Court for perusal, (ii) the names of the officers responsible for causing delay in complying with the directions issued in *Manish Kumar Singh (supra)*, (iii) district-wise and date-wise details of the Commissioners of Police/Senior Superintendents of Police/Superintendents of Police who had complied with, as well as those who had failed to comply with, the directions contained in paragraph 29 of the order dated 29.11.2023, and (iv) the steps taken by the Home Department pursuant to Letter No.12358/RC (Civil) dated 04.12.2023 issued by the Registrar General of this Court to all the Commissioners of Police/ Senior Superintendents of Police/ Superintendents of Police through the Director General of Police, Government of Uttar Pradesh, Lucknow, and Letter No.12357/RC

(Civil) dated 04.12.2023 addressed to the Chief Secretary, Government of Uttar Pradesh.

B. A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE RELEVANT EXTRACTS OF THE MINUTES OF THE HIGH POWERED COMMITTEE MEETINGS:

12. Before proceeding further, it would be apposite to reproduce the operative portion of the judgment and order dated 29.11.2023 passed in *Manish Kumar Singh (supra)* for ready reference:

“26. In light of this context, this Court direct the State Government to constitute a High-Powered Committee, comprising of Chief Secretary, as its chairperson, to conduct a comprehensive examination of all relevant factors, particularly those outlined herein above. The Committee should include representatives from all relevant stakeholders, including the civil administration, public prosecutors, and police department officers. Their collective input should be used to develop comprehensive and well-structured guidelines for continuous/consistent monitoring the progress of investigations. The copy of the notification constituting the High-Powered Committee shall be forwarded immediately to the office of the Registrar General of this court to be kept in the record of this case.

27. In the event of non-compliance of the aforesaid guidelines as may be framed, a framework for holding individual officers accountable and establishing a supervision mechanism at the District, Zonal, and State Levels should be devised. As one possible measure to hold errant officers accountable, their appointment as Station House Officer (S.H.O.), Station Officer (S.O.), or In-charge of a police station (Chowki-in-charge) could be withheld for a specified period, among other potential actions.

28. The authority to establish these guidelines indeed lies within the purview of the State government. In accordance with the principles expounded in the judgment, the Committee shall consider the following:

(i) In the initial phase, the Committee shall formulate guidelines for monitoring the investigation of First Information Reports (FIRs) registered by government departments in cases involving corruption and cheating. Subsequently, it will extend these guidelines in a phased manner to cover all other FIRs as may be found suitable and appropriate by the Committee.

(ii) The guidelines should ensure that investigations are completed within in a phased manner expeditiously, and strictly in accordance with the provisions outlined in Chapters-V, VI, VII, and XII of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 as well

as other applicable legal provisions intended to facilitate effective, fair, unbiased, and expeditious investigation.

(iii) In cases the police conclude that no case is made out against the accused or the suspect, the final report should be filed strictly in accordance with Regulation 122 (iii) of the U.P. Police Regulations. The Regulation 122 (i), (ii), and (iv) of the U.P. Police Regulations, 1861 should also be taken into consideration while formulating these guidelines.

(iv) The inclusion of mechanisms for systematic date-wise tracking of court proceedings, both at the district and state levels, is imperative to guarantee the expeditious disposal of the case. Moreover, it is imperative for the department to meticulously have a track on the testimony of witnesses, ensuring that they depose factually correct, just and necessary information in the court, devoid of any apprehension or external factors that could potentially sway the course of justice, and shall also develop a mechanism for fixing accountability if a witness act in defiance of law.

29. In the initial phase, this Court directs all Commissioners of Police/Senior Superintendent of Police/Superintendent of Police from all districts to provide a list of FIRs that have been registered on behalf of government departments. This list shall include the date of registration of FIR, the time and place of the incident, the name of the complainant, and the names of the suspects/accused persons. Additionally, a brief overview of the progress made in the investigations conducted thus far should be included. This information must be submitted within one month from the date of receiving a copy of this order to the Chief Secretary's office. This quantifiable data collected from all police stations be used to formulate comprehensive guidelines.

30. This Court directs all the Commissioners of Police/SSPs/SPs to endorse their subjective satisfaction by independently evaluating the circumstances and the material placed before them, thereby justifying the submission of a final report as outlined in Regulation 122 (iii) of the U.P. Police Regulations by a speaking order. The copies of this judgment shall be dispatched to all Commissioners of Police/SSPs/SPs in Uttar Pradesh for prompt adherence. A notification, if any, by government delegating the authority of Commissioner of Police/S.S.P./S.P.s to any of the subordinate officer to sign and forward the closure report shall stand inoperative from the date of this order in cases registered by Government Department/PSUs/Public Authorities/Co-operative Societies of Government and/or organisations covered by Article 12 of the Constitution of India.

31. A copy of this order shall be forwarded to the Chief Secretary of Uttar Pradesh with an expectation that guidelines shall be formulated in a timely manner, preferably within three months and not exceeding, in any case, beyond a period of six months. In consequence thereof, the relevant directions/G.O. shall also be issued to all the civil and police departments as may be necessary in align with the spirit of this judgment.

32. A copy of this order be sent to all District Judges, who should then circulate it amongst all Magistrates, Civil Judges, and Chief Judicial Magistrates concerned. They are responsible for ensuring strict adherence to Regulation 122 (iii) of the U.P. Police Regulations, 2001. The respective judicial officers should also ensure compliance with the directives outlined in paragraph 30 of this order and shall take into account the endorsement provided by the Commissioner of Police/Senior Superintendent of Police/Superintendent of Police before taking cognizance of the matter.”

13. The original file relating to the constitution of the Committee was produced before this Court for perusal. Compliance with the remaining directions was directed to be made by way of an affidavit sworn by an officer not below the rank of the Secretary.

14. A perusal of the file produced before this Court reveals that the State Government has, by a unanimous resolution, reaffirmed its foundational commitment to the constitutional concept of a welfare state. Pursuant to this commitment, the State Government implements various public utility schemes and conducts government activities and operations aimed at the welfare of the general public. The State Government has declared a policy of zero tolerance towards corruption in such schemes, activities and operations, and remains firmly committed to initiate the strictest possible action against any individual found to have engaged in corrupt practices. Consequently, with a view to ensure effective execution of the State Government’s campaign against corruption, effective supervision of cases registered by various Government Departments in this regard has been held to be imperative and indispensable.

15. Pursuant to the aforesaid resolution, and in compliance with the order dated 29.11.2023 passed by this Court, a High-Powered Committee was constituted on 09.12.2025, comprising the Chief Secretary, Government of Uttar Pradesh, as a Chairman; the Principal Secretary/Additional Chief Secretary (Home); the Principal Secretary (Law) and Legal Adviser; the Director General of Police; and the Director General of Police (Prosecution), as its members. Provision was

also made enabling the Chairman of the Committee to take the assistance of any other officer as he may deem fit and proper.

16. It is noteworthy that the Committee was constituted by the Chief Secretary, Uttar Pradesh, only after this Court took cognizance of the present matter, and that too after an inordinate delay of nearly two years, despite the specific direction requiring its constitution within six months. It was further directed that, in the first phase, all Commissioners of Police, Senior Superintendents of Police, and Superintendents of Police across the State shall furnish a list of all FIRs registered at the instance of Government Departments. Such list was required to contain particulars including the date of registration of the FIR, the date, time, and place of occurrence, the name of the informant/complainant, the names of the suspected or accused persons, and a brief status report indicating the progress made in the investigation up to that stage.

17. The aforesaid information was directed to be submitted to the office of the Chief Secretary within one month from the date of receipt of a copy of the order. The quantifiable data so collected from all police stations across the State was intended to serve as the basis for formulating comprehensive guidelines in the matter.

18. Admittedly, there has been a delay of nearly two years in constituting the Committee. This Court proposes to examine the possible reasons for such delay and to consider measures for addressing and mitigating the factors responsible for delays in the implementation of the orders passed by this Court.

19. Shri Manish Goel, learned Additional Advocate General, appeared on behalf of the Chief Secretary, Uttar Pradesh, and apprised the Court that the Committee has started functioning and meetings of the Committee were convened on 17.12.2025 and 24.12.2025.

20. A brief account of the steps taken by the High-Powered Committee pursuant to the aforesaid directions is delineated in the succeeding paragraphs. The Committee took cognizance of the directions and conditions contained in paragraphs 26 and 28 of *Manish*

Kumar Singh (supra), which have already been reproduced hereinabove. At the initial stage, the High-Powered Committee resolved to constitute two subordinate committees, namely: (i) the Divisional-Level Monitoring Committee; and (ii) the District-Level Monitoring Committee. The constitution of these committees was intended to facilitate effective monitoring, collection of relevant data, and implementation of the directions issued by this Court in a structured and time-bound manner.

21. The Divisional-Level Monitoring Committee shall comprise the Divisional Commissioner as the Chairperson; the Additional Director General of Police (Zone) as the Member Secretary; and the Inspector General of Police (Range), Divisional In-charge, Prison Administration, and Regional Additional Director (Prosecution) as Members.

22. The District-Level Monitoring Committee shall comprise the District Magistrate as the Chairperson; the Commissioner of Police/Senior Superintendent of Police/Superintendent of Police as the Member Secretary; and the Jail Superintendent, Joint Director (Prosecution), Head of the concerned Department, and such other officer(s) as may be nominated by the Chairperson, as Members.

23. At the initial stage, the Committee observed that although criminal cases are already being monitored under the Government of India's Interoperable Criminal Justice System (ICJS), an additional mechanism for monitoring at the departmental level is necessary to ensure effective supervision and coordination. A perusal of the minutes of the meetings indicates that information relating to criminal cases registered at the instance of Government Departments is required to be forwarded to the Committee for review and monitoring.

24. The proceedings further reveal that the Committee considered the collection and consolidation of such information to be an essential prerequisite for assessing the status of investigations, identifying systemic deficiencies, and formulating appropriate recommendations for effective implementation of the directions issued by this Court.

25. On 18.02.2026, the Secretary (Home), Government of Uttar Pradesh, filed a compliance affidavit averring that the police, prosecution and other concerned departments have been directed to produce the requisite documents before the High-Powered Committee for further deliberations. The affidavit further records that the Letter No.12357/ARC (Civil) dated 04.12.2023, issued by the Registrar General of this Court, was received in the concerned Section through a letter dated 16.08.2024 issued from the Office of the Chief Secretary. The affidavit also places on record the following correspondence:

25.1 Letter No.DGJ-Saat-S-14(05)/2024 dated 17.02.2026 issued by the Additional Director General of Police (Crime), Uttar Pradesh, addressed to all Zonal Additional Directors General of Police, all Commissioners of Police, and the Additional Directors General of Police (GRP/EOW/ACO), Uttar Pradesh. It makes reference to the letter of the Special Secretary, Home (Police) Section-9, Government of Uttar Pradesh, bearing No.20/Chh-Pu-0-9-2026-1763301 dated 14.02.2026, through which information was sought in compliance with the order dated 10.02.2026 passed by this Court in the present petition. Pursuant to the said letter, all addressees were called upon to furnish; **(i)** the names of the officers responsible for the delay in compliance with the order dated 29.11.2023, and **(ii)** district-wise and date-wise details of the Commissioners of Police/ Senior Superintendents of Police/ Superintendents of Police, who had complied with, and those who had failed to comply with, the directions issued in paragraph 29 of the order dated 29.11.2023.

25.2 It was further noted therein that, in compliance with the order dated 29.11.2023, the Director General of Police, Uttar Pradesh, has already issued instructions on 22.12.2023 vide Letter No.DGJ-Das-Vi-Pu-Writ-470/2023/4387, directing all the Commissioners of Police and Senior Superintendents of Police/ Superintendents of Police that in cases registered by the Government departments, Public Sector Undertakings and Co-operative Societies where the first information report has

reached the stage of a final report, speaking orders must be passed and placed before the concerned courts.

25.3 Letter No.2003/Chh-Pu-0-9-2025-1783301 dated 10.12.2025 was issued by the Principal Secretary, Home (Police) Section-9, Government of Uttar Pradesh, to all the Divisional Commissioners, Commissioners of Police, District Magistrates, Senior Superintendents of Police, Superintendents of Police, and Government Railway Police, Uttar Pradesh, on the subject of monitoring of FIRs registered by the Government departments. The letter begins by reaffirming the State Government's constitutional obligation to function as a welfare State and its policy of zero tolerance towards corruption. It further takes note of the Inter-Operable Criminal Justice System ('ICJS') already operational in the State for monitoring criminal cases, while observing that better supervision of FIRs registered by Government departments remains necessary. The letter then reproduces the operative directions from this Court's order dated 29.11.2023 in Criminal Misc. Writ Petition No.14349/2023, wherein this Court had directed the State to constitute a High-Powered Committee chaired by the Chief Secretary, comprising representatives from civil administration, the prosecution and the police, to develop comprehensive guidelines for monitoring the progress of investigations.

25.4 The directions further required that, guidelines ensure completion of investigations in a time-bound manner in accordance with Chapters V, VI, VII and XII of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973; final reports in cases of no evidence be filed strictly in accordance with *Regulation 122(iii) of the Uttar Pradesh Police Regulations*; and that systematic, date-wise tracking of court proceedings be maintained. Paragraph 29 of the order directed all the Commissioners of Police/ Senior Superintendents of Police/ Superintendents of Police to submit a list of FIRs registered by Government departments to the Office of the Chief Secretary within one month; paragraph 30 directed them to independently pass speaking orders before submitting any final report; paragraph 31 directed the Chief Secretary to formulate comprehensive

guidelines within three to six months; and paragraph 32 directed all District Judges to circulate the order to all the Magistrates and Chief Judicial Magistrates for adherence. In accordance with the aforesaid directions, a State-level High-Powered Monitoring Committee was constituted under the Chairmanship of the Chief Secretary, Uttar Pradesh, comprising the Principal Secretary/Additional Chief Secretary (Home), the Principal Secretary (Law) and Legal Remembrancer, the Director General of Police, the Director General of Prosecution, and any other officer considered necessary.

C. FINDINGS OF THE COURT:

26. The State Government has, on repeated occasions, resolved and declared its policy of zero tolerance towards corruption and its commitment to eradicate corrupt practices from all organs of governance. Anti-Corruption Department of the Government of Uttar Pradesh are entrusted with the responsibility of dealing firmly with officers involved in corruption, which causes loss to the State exchequer and corrupts the administrative machinery. It is a well-recognized principle that absolute and untrammelled discretion breeds corruption and provides fertile ground for discrimination, both of which are antithetical to due process and the rule of law culture.

27. This Court continues to encounter frequent instances of non-compliance with its orders. The compliance of the directions issued in *Manish Kumar Singh (supra)* was rendered possible only by virtue of the intervention of this Court in the present case, and that too after an inordinate delay of two years.

28. In this backdrop, this Court finds itself confronted with several options; (i) to initiate contempt proceedings against the Chief Secretary, who occupies a unique and pivotal position in the administrative hierarchy, for failure to comply with the directions of this Court for more than two years, until the issue was re-agitated in the present proceedings, (ii) to persuade officers to comply through the salutary apprehension of contempt, and to await the outcome of their deliberations, (iii) to direct

the Chief Secretary to appear in person before this Court and explain the reasons for non-compliance, (iv) to fix personal responsibility and impose exemplary costs, (v) to direct time-bound compliance monitoring, (vi) to record an adverse remark against the concerned officers and transmit the same to the Cadre Controlling Authority, and (vii) to frame compliance mechanisms and take a strict view of repeated defiance, etc.

29. This Court records, without any hesitation or ambiguity, that it possesses full clarity to exercise any of the options enumerated above in order to maintain public confidence and uphold the rule of law. However, in the interest of the State and its institutions, this Court deems it appropriate to refrain, for the time being, from invoking any of the above said options. This restraint is exercised in the hope and expectation that public administrators, who are well familiar with the machinery of the government, are better placed and equipped to evolve and develop effective mechanisms for implementing public policy and programmes. Courts, to a considerable extent, consciously avoid prescribing a catalogue of ‘*dos and don’ts*’ for civil servants. However, such judicial restraint must not be mistaken for judicial indifference.

30. As partial compliance of the directions issued in *Manish Kumar Singh (supra)* has been effected, and it is given to understand that the High-Powered Committee has commenced its work, this Court expresses the hope and expectation that the remaining directions shall also be complied with in a time-bound manner. In that view of the matter, this Court does not consider it necessary, at this stage, to escalate the matter further.

31. Before parting with the present matter, this Court considers it appropriate to place on record certain observations which, in its considered opinion, warrant the attention of the Hon’ble the Chief Minister, Uttar Pradesh that the time has come for the State to evolve and adopt a doctrine of ‘*superior responsibility*’, whereby senior officers in an administrative hierarchy are held accountable- and, in appropriate

cases, criminally responsible for their failure to prevent or punish acts of commission or omission by their subordinates. The expression '*failure to prevent*' must be understood to include '*the failure to take timely administrative measures*' or '*to report the matter to higher administrative authorities*'. Exceptional situations that produce widespread, systematic and enduring adverse effects upon public administration demand exceptional remedies. A duty to report or act may appropriately be developed within administrative law to address systematic and prevalent under-performance, negligence, breach of service ethics and dereliction of service codes. Senior officers must be held accountable for the conduct and performance of their subordinates, as it is both their professional and administrative responsibility to ensure the effective delivery of public services. Such accountability may legitimately be extended to criminal liability where the failure to prevent or punish leads to criminal acts such as corruption, fraud, willful suppression of records, contempt of government orders and Gazette Notifications, and failure to implement '*State policy*', and '*Programmes*', such as zero tolerance towards organised, institutionalised corruption- whether corruption of the mind, whereby the decision-making process is deliberately perverted to serve private ends under the guise of official authority, or corruption of the purse, whereby public office is converted into an instrument of personal pecuniary gain.

32. This Court apprehends that a significant impediment to the effective implementation of directions issued by this Court may lie in the mindset of certain sections of the bureaucracy, whose approach is not inclusive and who tend to regard the retention of discretionary power as an end in itself, thereby undermining legal certainty. The apprehension of losing discretion may well be one of the principal drivers of '*red-tapism*' in public administration. It must be borne in mind that rules and regulations derive their very rationale from the imperative to limit unguided discretion as a means of achieving greater accountability and ensuring that public power is exercised in a transparent, principled and rule-bound manner.

33. The present matter was listed and heard on 03.12.2025, 11.12.2025, 18.12.2025, 12.01.2026, 27.01.2026, 10.02.2026, 19.02.2026 and 24.02.2026. On 25.02.2026, the matter was reserved for orders. The learned Additional Advocate General assured this Court that the High-Powered Committee has been actively engaging in deliberations with the concerned stakeholders with a view to complying with the directions of this Court given in *Manish Kumar Singh (supra)*. This Court waited for a period of over three months with the expectation that it would be apprised of the progress of the decisions taken by the High-Powered Committee before the judgment was pronounced. Two days prior to the pronouncement of the present judgment, the office of this Court contacted the learned State counsels to enquire about the progress of the decisions taken by the High-Powered Committee. No information has been furnished to this Court till the date of pronouncement of this judgment, its unfortunate.

34. Learned Additional Advocate General, must appreciate that the Chief Secretary, functioning as the Secretary to the Cabinet and the Council of Ministers and serving, in that capacity, as the principal adviser to the Hon'ble Chief Minister and the Hon'ble Council of Ministers on all matters of civil administration, policy implementation, and inter-departmental coordination, occupies a special and privileged position and is, in every sense, the keystone of the arch of State administration. It is, therefore, imperative that the learned law officers conduct themselves with extraordinary vigilance, circumspection, and a heightened sense of institutional responsibility while discharging their duties.

35. On merits of the present case, no response has been received from the office of the respondent no.2- the Regional Passport Authority, Bareilly, till the pronouncement of this judgment.

D. ORDER:

36. In view of the facts and circumstances discussed hereinabove, the impugned order dated 20.09.2025 passed by the learned Special Judge,

Bareilly, is hereby set aside. The instant petition is accordingly *allowed*. 'No Objection Certificate (NOC)' is hereby issued in favour of the petitioner for renewal of his passport. The Regional Passport Authority, Bareilly is directed to issue/renew the passport in favour of the petitioner, in accordance with the prescribed procedure.

37. The Registrar (Compliance) is hereby directed to forthwith transmit a certified copy of this order to the Chief Secretary, Government of Uttar Pradesh, with a direction that the proceedings of the High-Powered Committee be concluded in a timely and effective manner, so as to give full effect to the directions issued in *Manish Kumar Singh (supra)*, and that a structured procedure be evolved and comprehensive guidelines be framed to address the issues raised in the aforesaid judgment, along with an effective and swift accountability mechanism for the errant officers. The Chief Secretary is further directed to place a copy of this order before Hon'ble the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh for perusal and due consideration of the concerns flagged in '*paragraph 31*' of this order.

June 03, 2026
A. Tripathi

(Vinod Diwakar, J.)