

IN THE HIGH COURT FOR THE STATE OF TELANGANA AT HYDERABAD

TUESDAY, THE THIRD DAY OF MARCH
TWO THOUSAND AND TWENTY SIX

PRESENT

THE HON'BLE THE CHIEF JUSTICE SRI APARESH KUMAR SINGH
AND

THE HON'BLE SRI JUSTICE G.M. MOHIUDDIN

WRIT APPEAL NO: 261 OF 2026

Writ Appeal under clause 15 of the Letters Patent preferred against Order dated 01.12.2025 in W.P.No.33612 of 2025 on the file of the High Court.

Between:

Mannava Bhargava, S/o.M.Subba Rao, aged about 32 years, Occ. Business, R/o.H.No.1-2-33/95, Road No.7, Prashant Nagar, Nizampet Road, Kukatpally, Hyderabad-85.

...APPELLANT

AND

1. The Union of India, rep by its Under Secretary, Petroleum and Natural Gas, Shastry Bhavan, New Delhi
2. The Indian Oil Corporation Ltd., (IOCL), rep. by its Managing Director, G-9, Ali Yavar Gunj Marg, Bandra (East), Mumbai-400051
3. The Divisional LPG Sales Head G, IOCL, Secunderabad Indane Divisional Office, Indian Oil Bhavan, Fathebagh, Moosapet, Kukatpally Industrial Estate, Sanathnagar, Hyderabad -18

...RESPONDENTS

IA 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 suspend the cancellation proceedings of the respondent No.3 vide Ref.No.SIDO/ND/SANT/05, dt.29.09.2025, during the pendency of Writ Appeal, in the interest of justice.

Counsel for the Appellant: SRI B. MAHENDER REDDY

Counsel for the Respondent No.1: SRI N. BHUJANGA RAO,

DEPUTY SOLICITOR GENERAL OF INDIA

**Counsel for the Respondent No.2 & 3: SRI DOMINIC FERNANDES,
S.C. FOR IOCL**

The Court made the following: JUDGMENT

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

WRIT APPEAL No.261 of 2026

Dated: 03.03.2026

Between:

Mannava Bhargava

...Appellant

and

The Union of India,
Rep. by its Under Secretary, Petroleum and Natural Gas,
Shastry Bhavan, New Delhi,
and 2 others.

...Respondents

JUDGMENT:

Learned counsel Sri B.Mahender Reddy appears for the
appellant.

Sri N.Bhujanga Rao, learned Deputy Solicitor General of India,
appears for respondent No.1.

Sri Dominic Fernandes, learned Standing Counsel for Indian Oil
Corporation Limited, appears for respondents No.2 and 3.

2. The candidature of the appellant for Non-Domestic Non
Exempted (NDNE) Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) Retailership at

Sanathnagar, Hyderabad, was rejected by proceedings dated 29.09.2025 on the ground that the certificate of experience submitted from the establishment of M/s. Vikasni Indane was found to be not genuine upon verification from the said concern. The said proceedings was challenged by the appellant in W.P.No.33612 of 2025. The Proprietor of M/s. Vikasni Indane, in reply to the letter of Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) dated 20.06.2025 for verification of the document submitted by the appellant, gave an endorsement that the experience certificate produced by the appellant was not issued or signed by him and the said document was not genuine. The learned writ court, therefore, refused to interfere in the said proceedings and dismissed the writ petition vide judgment dated 01.12.2025. Being aggrieved, the appellant has preferred this appeal.

3. One of the arguments made on behalf of the appellant is that M/s. Vikasni Indane has not disputed the experience, but only disputed the signature. Therefore, IOCL should have properly enquired about the experience of the appellant for being eligible for award of NDNE LPG Retailership. It is further submitted that the advertisement issued by the IOCL did not specifically require the experience certificate to be submitted by any candidate interested in the retailership. It is also submitted during the course of arguments that M/s. Vikasni Indane has

issued certificate to some other agency. The learned writ court without appreciating the *bona fides* of the appellant has refused to interfere in the order of rejection, though it is in violation of principles of natural justice.

4. Learned Standing Counsel for IOCL has produced the copy of the letter dated 20.06.2025 containing the endorsement of the Proprietor of M/s. Vikasni Indane, which, according to him, was also produced during the hearing of the writ petition and should have been annexed to the memo of appeal. Learned Standing Counsel submits that the Proprietor of M/s. Vikasni Indane has categorically denied his signature on the experience certificate said to have been issued by him and also endorsed that the said document was not genuine.

5. Learned Standing Counsel for IOCL has drawn the attention of this court to the Application Format for NDNE Retailer IOCL at paragraphs 10 and 15. It is submitted that all the applicants are required to submit the experience certificate, as marks are awarded against experience as per the criteria laid down under the advertisement. Reference is made to the IOCL Selection Guidelines on appointment and operation of NDNE Retailers for marketing of Packed NDNE LPG to Industrial/Commercial Segments. As per the said guidelines, for experience, 5 marks are to be awarded. It is submitted that paragraph 10

of the Application Format for NDNE Retailer IOCL clearly indicates that if during verification it is found that the information given is incorrect/false/misrepresented, then the applicant's candidature will stand cancelled and will not be eligible for NDNE LPG Retailership. Therefore, if upon verification, the experience certificate is found to be not genuine, there is no further requirement of notice or compliance of principles of natural justice before rejecting the candidature of the applicant. In these circumstances, the learned writ court was right in refusing to interfere in the matter.

6. We have heard learned counsel for the parties and taken into note the relevant materials relied upon from the records including the letter dated 20.06.2025 containing the endorsement of the Proprietor of M/s. Vikasni Indane on the subject of verification of the document submitted by the appellant for NDNE Retailer Distributionship Selection by IOCL.

7. We find that the submission of experience certificate was a requirement under the advertisement and is also reflected in the format of application. The eligibility of a candidate for such selection depends upon the verification of the credentials by the employer. If on verification, such credentials or certificates are not found to be genuine, there is no further requirement on the part of the employer to seek an

explanation from the concerned candidate for rejecting his candidature. The essential eligibility criteria prescribed by such advertisement for selection has to be fulfilled by any such interested candidate. If any false or fabricated document is produced, it vitiates all the proceedings or claim of such a candidate. In such circumstances, we do not find any error in the impugned judgment of the learned writ court refusing to interfere in the proceedings dated 29.09.2025, whereby the candidature of the appellant was cancelled on production of the experience certificate which was not found to be genuine.

8. The instant appeal is, therefore, dismissed. There shall be no order as to costs.

Miscellaneous applications pending, if any, shall stand closed.

**SD/-MOHD. ISMAIL
DEPUTY REGISTRAR**

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SECTION OFFICER

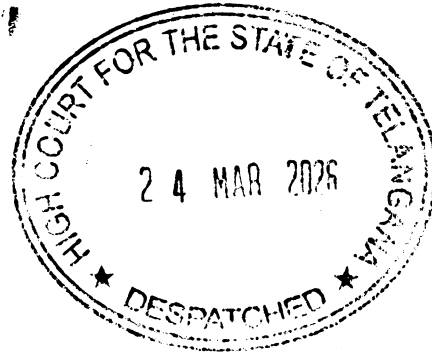
To

1. One CC to SRI B. MAHENDER REDDY, Advocate [OPUC]
2. One CC to SRI N. BHUJANGA RAO, Deputy Solicitor General of India [OPUC]
3. One CC to SRI DOMINIC FERNANDES, S.C. for IOCL [OPUC]
4. Two CD Copies

MP
BS

HIGH COURT

DATED:03/03/2026



JUDGMENT

WA.No.261 of 2026

**DISMISSING THE WRIT APPEAL
WITHOUT COSTS**

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