

Court seeks civil services exam screening 'formula'

The Delhi High Court Tuesday directed the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) to submit the 'formula' it was adopting for screening the candidates for recruitment to the civil services.

Justice B.D. Ahmed asked the government's recruitment agency to submit its contention in a sealed cover by March 28 as the UPSC has refused to concede to the demands of the candidates for revealing the marks.

The UPSC counsel submitted that the commission was adopting a scaling system, which could not be revealed to the students.

'Revealing of the marks would infringe intellectual property right of the commission. The coaching institutes might decipher short-cut methods to the advantage of its students,' said the UPSC.

Many meritorious candidates might be at disadvantage if the marks, cut-off points and the scaling system were revealed, it said.

The information sought by about 2,500 IAS aspirants like cut-off marks, individual scores scaling criteria and model answers were top secret and disclosure of such 'crucial' documents would lead to violation of intellectual property, counsel said.

'Once the data is disclosed the damage will be done and it will not be possible to undo the same... Consequently, the UPSC, which is a constitutional authority, will be put to irreparable loss.'

Justice Ahmed asked the UPSC Counsel: 'What is wrong in providing marks?'

Senior counsel Prashant Bhushan appearing for a group of students contended that it was the fundamental right of the applicant to know the marks and cut-off point of the examination.

Institutions and agencies all over the world had been providing marks to the candidates, whereas the UPSC was secretive, Bhushan said.

The UPSC had filed a petition in the high court challenging the Central Information Commission (CIC)'s Nov 13, 2006 order to disclose within two weeks the marks of the candidates.

In an order Nov 27, 2006, the high court had stayed the execution of the CIC order.

The UPSC had sought directions to the CIC for an ex-parte interim stay of its order on the ground that disclosure of the information would undermine the entire examination procedure and cause irreparable loss to it.

A full-bench of the CIC, headed by Chief Information Commissioner Wajahat Habibullah, had passed the order on separate applications filed by over 100 unsuccessful candidates seeking disclosure of the marks obtained by them in the preliminary examination last year.

The CIC had asked the UPSC to reveal the cut-off marks in optional papers of the shortlisted candidates, who made it to the main examination.

The CIC also directed the UPSC to disclose its scaling system, saying: 'It involves larger public interest and provides level-playing field to all aspirants.'

(© IANS / India eNews)