

**IN THE COURT OF MR. HARGURVARINDER SINGH JAGGI,
ADDL. SESSIONS JUDGE (FTC– 01), SOUTH DISTRICT, SAKET
COURTS, NEW DELHI**

[Date of Judgment : 28.09.2026]

FORM-A

SC No.: CNR No.: FIR No.: Police Station: u/Section:	280/2021 DLST01-007209-2021 06/2021 Sangam Vihar 326B, 195A, 506, 34 IPC	
Complainant:	STATE (Smt. Renu)	
Represented by –	Mr. Santosh Kumar, Addl. Public Prosecutor for the State	
Accused Person(s):	1. Preet Pal (A1) , S/o Sh. Ramesh 2. Ramesh (A2) , S/o Late Ram Babu 3. Suresh Chand (A3) , S/o Late Ram Babu 4. Bablu Kumar (A4) , S/o Sh. Brahm Dev	
Represented by –	Mr. Sandeep Mishra & Mr. Surbhit Nandan, Advocates	

Date of Offence:	09.07.2019
Date of FIR:	07.01.2021
Date of Chargesheet:	28.05.2021
Date of Framing Charges:	22.02.2024 (A1-A3) 24.04.2024 (A4)
Date of Commencement of Evidence:	18.12.2024
Date of Judgment reserved:	10.09.2026
Date of pronouncement of Judgment:	28.09.2026
Date of the Sentencing Order, if any:	N/A (Acquitted)

FORM-B

S.No.	Rank	Name of Accused	Date of Arrest	Date of Release on Bail	Offences Charged	Whether Acquitted or Convicted	Sentence Imposed	Period of detention undergone during Trial u/s 428 CrPC / 468 BNSS
1.	A1	Preet Pal	22.03.2021	15.09.2021	326B/195A/506/34 IPC	Acquitted	N/A	-
2.	A2	Ramesh	Not Arrested (Notice u/s 41A)	Bail granted	326B/195A/506/34 IPC	Acquitted	N/A	-
3.	A3	Suresh Chand	Not Arrested (Notice u/s 41A)	Bail granted	326B/195A/506/34 IPC	Acquitted	N/A	-
4.	A4	Bablu Kumar	Not Arrested (Notice u/s 41A)	Bail granted	326B/195A/506/34 IPC	Acquitted	N/A	-

JUDGMENT

28.09.2026

1. The four accused persons, namely Preet Pal (A1), Ramesh (A2), Suresh Chand (A3), and Bablu Kumar (A4), have been sent up to face trial for offences punishable under Sections 326B, 195A, and 506 read with Section 34 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860 (IPC), pursuant to the investigation conducted in FIR No. 06/2021 registered at Police Station Sangam Vihar, New Delhi.
2. The prosecution alleges that on 09.07.2019, the accused persons in furtherance of their common intention threw acid/chemical liquid upon the complainant, Smt. Renu (PW-4), near Shiv Mandir, Sangam Vihar, threatened to withdraw an earlier criminal complaint lodged under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act against accused Preet Pal.

Facts

3. Briefly stated, the case of the prosecution unfolded from the complaint of Smt. Renu (PW-4) is that on 09.07.2019 at about 06:30 PM, after finishing her work as a laborer/beldar, while she was returning home on foot near Shiv Mandir, Gali No. 16, Block-H, Sangam Vihar, New Delhi, four persons arrived on two motorcycles. Accused Preet Pal was riding one motorcycle with his father Ramesh (A2) on the pillion seat, while accused Bablu (A4) was riding the second motorcycle with accused Suresh (A3) sitting behind him.
4. It is alleged that the accused persons threw acid on the back and waist of the complainant from behind. The complainant felt a severe

burning sensation and upon turning around, allegedly saw a bottle in the hand of accused Preet Pal. It is further alleged that the accused persons threatened her stating, “*Abhi toh tumhare upar acid dala hai, agar tum apni ladkiwala case vapas nhi logi toh, tumhari beti k upar bhi tezaab dalenge aur tumhe jaan se maar denge*” (We have thrown acid on you now; if you do not withdraw your daughter's case, we will throw acid on your daughter as well and kill you), thereafter all four accused persons fled from the spot.

5. The complainant screamed for help, whereupon 5 to 7 public passersby allegedly gathered at the scene and poured two buckets of water on her back. Thereafter, a PCR call was made by the complainant as well as a public person. Police arrived at the spot and shifted the complainant to Safdarjung Hospital, where her medical examination (MLC) was conducted, noting 1% chemical burn injuries on her waist/back. Her clothes were seized by SI Mahipal (PW-3) vide memo Ex. PW1/A. However, no formal FIR was registered on that date, and DD No. 61A dated 09.07.2019 was kept pending.

Investigation by Police & Charge Sheet

6. The case file reveals an extraordinary procedural trajectory. Although the incident allegedly occurred on 09.07.2019 and the complainant's statement as well as MLC were collected on the same day, no FIR was registered for nearly 18 months. Eventually, on 07.01.2021, ASI Ramesh Chand (PW-2), upon receiving the pending file, prepared the *rukka* (Ex.PW2/B) and got FIR No. 06/2021 registered under Sections 324/195A/506/34 IPC through Duty Officer

ASI Vijay Pal (PW-6). Subsequently, during investigation, Section 326B IPC was substituted in place of Section 324 IPC.

7. ASI Ramesh Chand (PW-2) prepared the site plan (Ex.PW2/C) at the instance of the complainant on 08.01.2021. On 22.03.2021, accused Preet Pal (A1), who was already lodged in judicial custody in another case, was formally arrested vide arrest memo (Ex.PW2/E). The remaining three accused persons, Ramesh (A2), Suresh Chand (A3), and Bablu Kumar (A4) were granted interim protection by the Hon'ble High Court of Delhi vide order dated 13.05.2021 with directions to join investigation under Section 41A CrPC. Accordingly, notices were served upon them by SI Raghuraj Singh (PW-8), and they joined investigation.

8. Upon completion of investigation, the initial chargesheet against accused Preet Pal and supplementary chargesheet qua accused Ramesh, Suresh Chand, and Bablu Kumar were submitted before the Court.

Charge & Points of Determination

9. Vide orders dated 22.02.2024 and 24.04.2024, formal charges were framed by the learned predecessor Court against all four accused persons, Preet Pal (A1), Ramesh (A2), Suresh Chand (A3), and Bablu Kumar (A4) for offences punishable under Sections 326B/34 IPC, 195A/34 IPC, and 506-II/34 IPC. The charges were read over and explained to the accused persons in Hindi language, to which they pleaded not guilty and claimed trial.

10. To establish the guilt of the accused persons, the prosecution must prove the following points for determination beyond reasonable doubt:

10.1. Whether on 09.07.2019 at about 06:30 PM near Shiv Mandir, Gali No. 16, Block-H, Sangam Vihar, the accused persons in furtherance of their common intention voluntarily threw or attempted to throw acid on complainant Smt. Renu (PW-4)?

10.2. Whether the accused persons threatened complainant Smt. Renu with intent to cause her to give false evidence or withdraw criminal case FIR No. 160/2019 under the POCSO Act, attracting Section 195A read with Section 34 IPC?

10.3. Whether the accused persons committed criminal intimidation by threatening to cause death or grievous hurt to the complainant and her daughter, punishable under Section 506-II read with Section 34 IPC?

Prosecution's Evidence

11. To prove its case, the prosecution examined eight (8) witnesses in total during trial. The detailed list of witnesses and exhibits is cited in a table, under Form-C, List of Witnesses and List of Exhibits, as annexed to this judgment.

12. Head Constable Anita (PW-1) deposed that on 09.07.2019, she accompanied Sub-Inspector (SI) Mahipal to Safdarjung Hospital, where complainant produced her wearing clothes, a green suit, maroon *salwar*, black and maroon *chunni*, which were sealed in a *pullanda* with seal 'SGV5SED' and seized *vide* memo (Ex.PW1/A). During her recalled examination on 03.09.2025, she stated that the case property could not be produced by the MHC (M).

13. The investigating officer (IO), Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) Ramesh Chand (PW-2) deposed regarding receiving the case file in late 2020, preparing the *rukka* (Ex.PW2/B) on 07.01.2021 i.e., after 18 months, getting the FIR registered, preparing the site plan (Ex.PW2/C), arresting accused Preet Pal *vide* memo (Ex.PW2/E), and filing the chargesheet. In cross-examination, he admitted that he had no knowledge whatsoever regarding the reasons for the 18-month delay in registering the FIR, that no independent public witness was joined, no closed CCTV footage was collected, no CDR/location chart of mobile phones was obtained, and no physical article/bottle was seized from the spot.

14. SI Mahipal Singh (PW-3) deposed that on 09.07.2019, upon receiving DD No. 61A, he went to Safdarjung Hospital, recorded complainant's statement (Ex.PW3/A), collected her medico-legal certificate (MLC), seized her clothes, deposited them in *malkhana*, and sent them to RFSL Chanakyapuri on 26.07.2019. On 07.01.2026, MHC (M) reported before the Court that the case property was untraceable, destroyed.

15. The complainant Smt. Renu (PW-4), the solitary eyewitness deposed regarding the alleged incident dated 09.07.2019. In her cross-examination dated 18.03.2026 and 13.05.2026, she admitted that she turned around only after feeling a burning sensation on her back. PW-4 also stated that she cannot read or write Hindi or English languages and that she did not draft the complaint herself. PW-4 testified that five to seven public passersby gathered at the spot and poured water on her, and that she never visited the crime spot again after 09.07.2019. She denied living in a live-in relationship with Preet Pal but admitted lodging FIR No. 160/2019 under POCSO Act against Preet Pal prior to the incident.

16. Dr. Kanak Lata Verma (PW-5) Assistant Director, RFSL Chanakyapuri) proved the FSL report dated 21.10.2019 confirming that exhibits A1, A2, and A3 the clothes of complainant contained mineral acid, hydrochloric acid – HCl.

17. The Duty Officer, ASI Vijay Pal (PW-6) proved registration of FIR (Ex.PW6/A) on 07.01.2021 upon receiving *rukka* from ASI Ramesh Chand, along with certificate u/s 65B Evidence Act (Ex.PW6/C). He admitted that he obtained no written permission from senior officers for registering FIR after an 18-month gap.

18. ASI Devraj (PW7) participated in formal investigative proceedings.

19. SI Raghuraj Singh (PW-8) deposed regarding serving notices u/s 41A CrPC on accused Ramesh, Suresh Chand, and Bablu Kumar following the order of the Hon'ble High Court of Delhi.

20. The Court deems fit to record its observations about the destruction of case property. The case record reveals that during the examination of PW-4 on 18.03.2026, Sh. Tejram, Sr. Assistant from the SDM Office, Nazarat Branch, produced official records and report Mark-A1 i.e., F.No.1/SDM(M)/Nazarat Report/2024/211 dated 27.03.2025, confirming that a major fire broke out at the Malkhana Nazarat Branch, South District on 23.08.2024, in which the case property – burnt clothes of the present case was completely destroyed and could not be produced for identification.

Statement of Accused under Section 313, CrPC

21. On 30.05.2026, the statements of all four accused persons were recorded under Section 313 CrPC (read with Section 351 BNSS). All incriminating circumstances appearing in evidence were put to them. The accused persons denied all allegations as false, fabricated, and motivated by prior enmity.

22. Accused Preet Pal (A1) specifically stated that he lived in a peaceful live-in relationship with complainant Renu from 2016 to 2019 in Gali No. 16, Sangam Vihar. He discovered in May 2019 that Renu's real husband was alive and lodged in Hardoi Jail, UP pursuant to a conviction. When he confronted her and left her company on 06.05.2019, she made multiple PCR calls alleging domestic quarrels

vide DD Nos. 127, 129, 138, 139, 149 between 8:21 PM and 9:21 P.M. Thereafter, she falsely implicated him in a false POCSO Act case arising out of FIR No. 160/2019 registered at police station Sangam Vihar, in which he was acquitted by the learned POCSO Court *vide* judgment dated 28.03.2025. He stated that out of vengeance and hostility, complainant fabricated the present false acid attack story.

23. The accused Ramesh (A2) and Suresh Chand (A3) stated that they are permanent residents of village Bharagharad, Post Bhoyni, PS Raya, District Mathura, Uttar Pradesh, and were actively working as MNREGA laborers in their village on the date of the alleged incident i.e., 09.07.2019, having no connection whatsoever with the alleged crime in Delhi.

24. Whereas, the accused Bablu Kumar (A4) similarly asserted complete innocence, stating he was falsely dragged into the matter due to his acquaintance with Preet Pal.

Defence' Evidence

25. In support of their defence, the accused persons examined two witnesses. The accused No. 1, Preet Pal (DW-1), who stepped into the witness box on oath on 06.06.2026. He proved certified copies of five PCR call records dated 06.05.2019 (Ex.DW1/A (Colly.)), establishing ongoing domestic disputes between him and complainant Renu while living together. He also proved the certified copy of the judgment of acquittal dated 28.03.2025 in FIR No. 160/2019 PS Sangam Vihar (Ex.DW1/B), wherein the learned POCSO Court acquitted him after

holding the complainant's narrative to be contradictory and unconvincing.

26. The second defence witness, Pratap Singh (DW-2), former Gram Pradhan/Sarpanch of village Panchayat, Mathura, Uttar Pradesh, deposed on oath and produced official Gram Panchayat/MNREGA employment records (Ex.DW2/A), certifying that accused Ramesh (A2) and Suresh Chand (A3) were present and physically working as MNREGA laborers in Village Bharau Garh, Mathura, UP on 09.07.2019.

Submission by Counsels for Parties

27. Mr. Santosh Kumar, learned Additional Public Prosecutor (APP) for the State and Mr. Sandeep Mishra, learned defence counsel for the accused persons advanced oral arguments at length on 09.09.2026 and 10.09.2026. Comprehensive written submissions were also filed on record.

28. Mr. Kumar learned APP for the State submitted there exists sufficient evidence on record proven by the prosecution about prompt medical examination and forensic corroboration. The learned APP for the State submitted that the prosecution case is firmly grounded upon contemporaneous and unassailable documentary evidence. The Medico-Legal Certificate (MLC) (Ex.A-9) of complainant Smt. Renu was prepared immediately on the date of the incident i.e., 09.07.2019 at Safdarjung Hospital, recording 1% chemical burn injuries on her back and waist. It was contended that there was zero scope or

opportunity for falsification or fabrication at that initial stage. Furthermore, the Forensic Science Laboratory report (Ex.PW5/A) conclusively proved the presence of mineral acid (hydrochloric acid) on the clothes worn by the victim (Exhibits A1, A2, and A3).

29. Mr. Santosh Kumar learned APP for the State submitted that the degree of burn suffered is immaterial under Section 326B, IPC. The learned APP for the State forcefully argued that the percentage or clinical severity of chemical burns is legally immaterial for sustaining a charge under Section 326B IPC. Relying upon the judgment of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in ***Maqbool v. State of U.P. -- 2018 INSC 799***, the learned APP for the State emphasized that Section 326B IPC penalizes the act of voluntarily throwing or attempting to throw acid, irrespective of the extent of physical injury caused.

30. Mr. Kumar learned APP for the State urged that premeditation and common intention of the accused persons under Section 34, IPC is well established as all four accused persons, namely, Preet Pal (A1), Ramesh (A2), Suresh Chand (A3), and Bablu Kumar (A4) arrived together on two motorcycles, demonstrating prior meeting of minds, coordination, and premeditation rather than a sudden altercation. The accused Preet Pal was specifically identified holding the acid bottle, and all accused persons fled the scene together immediately after the act.

31. With regard to the accusations and charge framed against the accused persons for the commission of offences punishable under

Section 195A and 506, IPC, the learned APP contended that the motive behind the attack was directly linked to the pending POCSO case arising out of FIR No. 160/2019 PS Sangam Vihar lodged by the complainant against Preet Pal. The explicit threats issued by the accused at the crime spot warning the complainant to withdraw the POCSO case or face acid attacks on her daughter and death fully satisfy the essential statutory ingredients of Sections 195A and 506 IPC.

32. Lastly, Mr. Kumar learned APP for the State urged that defective investigation is not a ground for acquittal. The learned APP for the State submitted that the defence will vociferously argue about the delay in registration of FIR and investigative lapses, however this Court may find guidance from the ruling of the Apex Court in the case of *Shiv Muniappan v. State of Tamil Nadu*, arguing that mere shortcomings or procedural lacunae in police investigation such as non-collection of CCTV or CDR records cannot override the credible, direct ocular account of an acid attack victim. Given the barbaric nature of the crime and the societal need to deter violence against women, the learned APP for the State prayed for the conviction of all four accused persons.

33. On the other hand, Mr. Sandeep Mishra, learned defence counsel for the accused persons opened the arguments by submitting that this is a fit case of acquittal, as the prosecution has miserably failed to prove the guilt of the accused persons beyond reasonable doubt.

34. Mr. Mishra learned defence counsel for the accused person contended that both the police and the prosecution have failed to explain the delay of 18 months in registration of the FIR. The learned defence counsel meticulously submitted that while the alleged incident occurred on 09.07.2019, FIR No. 06/2021 was registered only on 07.01.2021—an unexplained, inordinate delay of 18 months. The Investigating Officer, ASI Ramesh Chand (PW-2), explicitly admitted in cross-examination that he had no knowledge regarding the reasons for this 18-month gap. Citing *Thulia Kali v. State of Tamil Nadu* ((1972) 3 SCC 393) and *Dilawar Singh v. State of Delhi* ((2007) 12 SCC 641), Ld. Counsel submitted that such an unexplained delay affords ample time for deliberation, embellishment, and false implication, destroying the spontaneity of the prosecution story.

35. The learned defence counsel contended that the prosecution's entire case is based on the testimony of sole eyewitness, the complainant, Renu (PW-4). The learned counsel further submitted that the sole testimony of complainant Renu (PW-4), fails the legal test of being wholly reliable. The learned counsel further submitted that PW-4 admitted during cross-examination that she turned around only after feeling a burning sensation on her back, proving that she did not actually witness who threw the corrosive liquid.

36. Mr. Mishra learned defence counsel submitted that despite the crime spot being near a public temple, Shiv Mandir where 5 to 7 passersby allegedly gathered, police did not join or examine a single independent public witness. The learned counsel further urged that

neither Renu (PW-4) named any of the persons, who helped her pour water on her to douse the burning sensation of alleged act of acid being thrown upon her.

37. Mr. Mishra learned defence counsel for the accused persons continued his verbal attack on the prosecution's case by citing that no electronic, digital evidence has been produced by the police. The learned counsel urged that no CCTV footage from the temple or route was seized, and no call detail records (CDR), or mobile location data were collected to prove the presence of the victim and/or accused at the alleged crime scene.

38. The learned counsel submitted that the police neither recovered any weapon of offence be it bottle/container containing the acid, nor the two motorcycles upon which all four accused persons were mounted and fled away after throwing acid upon the complainant.

39. Mr. Mishra learned defence counsel submitted that with flawed site plan and destruction of the case property, the prosecution's case falls like a pack of cards. The learned counsel pointed out glaring contradictions between police witnesses and the complainant. While the IO claimed the site plan (Ex.PW2/C) was prepared at the instance of PW-4 on 08.01.2021, PW-4 categorically deposed that she never visited the crime spot again after 09.07.2019.

40. The learned defence counsel further submitted that the primary physical case property i.e., complainant's burnt clothes were never produced before the Court and was reported destroyed in a fire at the

Malkhana Nazarat Branch (Mark-A1), causing severe, irreparable prejudice to the defence.

41. Mr. Mishra learned counsel for the accused persons submitted that the complainant embroiled the accused persons in a false and frivolous case, as she had deep-seated hostility against the accused, Preet Pal. The learned counsel submitted that the prosecution's narrative of motive is completely inverted. The learned counsel submitted that accused, Preet Pal (DW-1) proved certified copies of 5 PCR call records dated 06.05.2019 (Ex.DW1/A colly), establishing that Renu and Preet Pal lived together in a live-in relationship from 2016 to 2019, which PW-4 falsely suppressed. When Preet Pal discovered her real husband was alive and lodged in jail, he left her, prompting Renu to lodge false cases out of vengeance. Crucially, the accused person, Preet Pal in his defence produced the judgment dated 28.03.2025 (Ex.DW1/B), demonstrating that he was acquitted in the preceding POCSO case arising out of FIR No. 160/2019 after complete trial. The learned counsel further submitted that the judgment dated 28.03.2025 remains unassailed and has attained finality.

42. Regarding the co-accused persons, Ramesh (A2), Suresh Chand (A3), and Bablu Kumar (A4) the learned counsel urged that they pleaded complete innocence and false implication. Mr. Mishra, learned counsel submitted that accused Ramesh and Suresh led positive defence evidence through Pratap Singh (DW-2), former Gram Pradhan, who produced official Gram Panchayat/MNREGA records

(Ex.DW2/A) certifying that Ramesh and Suresh were physically present and working as daily laborers in Village Bharu, Mathura (U.P.) on 09.07.2019. The learned counsel urged that the prosecution failed to disprove these official public records.

43. To buttress his arguments, Mr. Mishra learned counsel for the accused persons placed reliance upon the Apex Court's decision in the case of *Sharad Birdhichand Sarda v. State of Maharashtra – 1984 INSC 121* and submitted that the prosecution has miserably failed to establish the chain of circumstances or prove guilt beyond reasonable doubt and beseeched an acquittal for all four accused persons.

Legal provision & Legal principles

44. Before marching ahead, the Court deems fit to touch upon the relevant legal provisions of Section 326A, 506, 195A, 34 IPC and legal principles.

45. Section 326A, IPC reads as under:

“326A. Voluntarily causing grievous hurt by use of acid, etc.—Whoever causes permanent or partial damage or deformity to, or burns or maims or disfigures or disables, any part or parts of the body of a person or causes grievous hurt by throwing acid on or by administering acid to that person, or by using any other means with the intention of causing or with the knowledge that he is likely to cause such injury or hurt, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which shall not be less than ten years but which may extend to imprisonment for life, and with fine:

Provided that such fine shall be just and reasonable to meet the medical expenses of the treatment of the victim:

Provided further that any fine imposed under this section shall be paid to the victim.”

46. Section 326A, IPC criminalizes causing grievous hurt by use of acid, i.e., acid attack causing specified kinds of serious injury, and prescribes stringent minimum punishment and victim-compensation through fine. Section 326A, IPC, applies where a person throws acid on, administers acid to, or uses any other means to cause permanent or partial damage or deformity, or burns, maims, disfigures, disables, or otherwise causes grievous hurt to any part of the victim's body, with intention to cause such injury or with knowledge that such injury is likely to be caused.

47. If proved, the offender under Section 326A, IPC is punishable with imprisonment of either description for not less than 10 years, extendable to imprisonment for life; and fine, which must be just and reasonable to meet the medical expenses of the victim's treatment, and must be paid to the victim.

48. Acid attacks represent one of the most egregious, heinous, and barbaric forms of gender-based violence. The primary objective of an chemical assault is not merely to cause bodily pain or physical injury; it is a calculated, malicious attempt to destroy the victim's identity, permanently disfigure their appearance, and relegate them to a lifetime of physical torture, profound emotional trauma, and absolute social

ostracization. The acid literally melts skin, tissue, and bone, leaving irreversible physical and psychological scars. A victim of an acid attack is forced to carry their trauma outwardly, suffering a daily psychological death. As eloquently articulated by the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in the landmark case of ***Omanakuttan v. State of Kerala [2019] 7 SCR 482***:

“The act of causing grievous hurt by use of acid, by its very nature, is a gruesome and horrendous one, which, apart from causing severe bodily pain, leaves the scars and untold permanent miseries for the victim.”

49. Historically, the Indian Penal Code lacked a dedicated, specialized provision to address the specific horrors of chemical assaults. Such crimes were prosecuted under general provisions like Section 326 IPC (voluntarily causing grievous hurt by dangerous weapons or means). However, these general provisions failed to recognize the unique cruelty of chemical disfigurement, and they did not mandate minimum punishments or address the critical financial and rehabilitative requirements of the victims. To bridge this gap, the Parliament of India, acting upon the recommendations of the Committee on Amendments to Criminal Law (popularly known as the Justice J.S. Verma Committee), enacted The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013.

50. This milestone amendment inserted Sections 326A and 326B IPC, carving out acid attacks as distinct, special offences. The legislature established a rigorous, deterrence-oriented framework, prescribing a mandatory minimum sentence of ten years (extendable

to life) under Section 326A, and a mandatory minimum of five years (extendable to seven years) under Section 326B.

51. To establish an offence under Section 326A, IPC, the prosecution generally must prove:

51.1. The act and means that the accused threw acid on the victim, administered acid, or used any other means that results in the kind of injuries covered by the section.

51.2. Such an act caused harm of permanent or partial damage, deformity, burns, maiming, disfigurement, disability of any body part, or grievous hurt.

51.3. The act committed such an act with the intention of causing such injury/hurt, or with the knowledge that it is likely to cause such injury/hurt.

52. Section 506, IPC, reads as under:

“506. Punishment for criminal intimidation.—Whoever commits the offence of criminal intimidation shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to two years, or with fine, or with both;

If threat be to cause death or grievous hurt, etc.—and if the threat be to cause death or grievous hurt, or to cause the destruction of any property by fire, or to cause an offence punishable with death or 8 [imprisonment for life], or with imprisonment for a term which may extend to seven years, or to impute unchastity to a woman, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to seven years, or with fine, or with both.”

53. Section 506 (Part II), IPC prescribes enhanced punishment for aggravated criminal intimidation, i.e., where the threat is of a particularly serious kind, such as death or grievous hurt. It is invoked when the intimidation described in Section 503 is coupled with any of the specified grave threats listed in the latter part of Section 506.

54. Section 506 provides punishment for the offence of criminal intimidation. The section is commonly understood in two parts. Part I: General punishment for criminal intimidation and the imprisonment up to two years, or fine, or both. Part II relates to the aggravated form, if the threat is – to cause death or grievous hurt, or to cause destruction of property by fire, or to cause an offence punishable with death, imprisonment for life, or imprisonment up to seven years, or to impute unchastity to a woman, then the punishment may extend to seven years, or fine, or both. In practice, “Part II” is used to denote this aggravated category carrying the higher maximum punishment.

55. The key ingredients for the prosecution to prove commission of an offence punishable under Section 506, IPC, it is relevant to discuss Sections 503, 504 and 506, IPC, which are reproduced as below:

“503. Criminal intimidation.—Whoever threatens another with any injury to his person, reputation or property, or to the person or reputation of any one in whom that person is interested, with intent to cause alarm to that person, or to cause that person to do any act which he is not legally bound to do, or to omit to do any act which that person is legally entitled to do, as the means of avoiding the execution of such threat, commits criminal intimidation.

Explanation.—A threat to injure the reputation of any deceased person in whom the person threatened is interested, is within this section.

Illustration

A, for the purpose of inducing B to resist from prosecuting a civil suit, threatens to burn B's house. A is guilty of criminal intimidation.

... ..

504. Intentional insult with intent to provoke breach of the peace.—Whoever intentionally insults, and thereby gives provocation to any person, intending or knowing it to be likely that such provocation will cause him to break the public peace, or to commit any other offence, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to two years, or with fine, or with both.

506. Punishment for criminal intimidation.—Whoever commits the offence of criminal intimidation shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to two years, or with fine, or with both;

If threat be to cause death or grievous hurt, etc.—and if the threat be to cause death or grievous hurt, or to cause the destruction of any property by fire, or to cause an offence punishable with death or 8[imprisonment for life], or with imprisonment for a term which may extend to seven years, or to impute unchastity to a woman, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to seven years, or with fine, or with both.”

56. To establish an offence under Section 506 Part II, the prosecution must generally prove:

56.1. Threat amounting to criminal intimidation. There must be a threat of injury to the victim's person, reputation, or property, or the person or reputation of someone in whom the victim is interested.

56.2. The threat must be made with intent, to cause alarm to the victim, or to cause the victim to do an act he is not legally

bound to do, or to cause the victim to omit an act he is legally entitled to do, as a means of avoiding the threat.

56.3. The threat must be of an aggravating nature. The intimidation must specifically be a threat of one of the following – death or grievous hurt, or destruction of property by fire, or commission of an offence punishable with death, imprisonment for life, or imprisonment up to seven years, or imputation of unchastity to a woman.

57. Section 195A, IPC relates to threatening any person to give false evidence. Section 195A, IPC reads as under:

“195A. Threatening any person to give false evidence.—Whoever threatens another with any injury to his person, reputation or property or to the person or reputation of any one in whom that person is interested, with intent to cause that person to give false evidence shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to seven years, or with fine, or with both;

and if innocent person is convicted and sentenced in consequence of such false evidence, with death or imprisonment for more than seven years, the person who threatens shall be punished with the same punishment and sentence in the same manner and to the same extent such innocent person is punished and sentenced.”

58. Section 195A was inserted by the Parliament by way of an amendment in the year 2006. Section 195A, IPC deals with threatening any person to give false evidence. It criminalises intimidation intended to make someone lie in a legal proceeding and

prescribes enhanced punishment where such false evidence leads to an innocent person being convicted and sentenced to severe punishment.

59. To establish an offence under Section 195A, the prosecution generally must prove:

59.1. The accused threatened the victim.

59.2. The threat was of injury to, the victim's person, reputation, property, or the person or reputation of someone in whom the victim is interested.

59.3. The threat was made with intent to cause the victim to give false evidence.

59.4. In case of enhanced punishment, if there was an aggravating result i.e., due to such false evidence, an innocent person is convicted and sentenced to death or imprisonment for more than 7 years.

60. Section 34, IPC reads as under:

“34. Acts done by several persons in furtherance of common intention.—When a criminal act is done by several persons in furtherance of the common intention of all, each of such persons is liable for that act in the same manner as if it were done by him alone.”

61. The ingredients of Section 34 are that the accused persons had acted in furtherance of their common intention is required to be proved specifically or by inference – See ***Hamlet alias Sasi & Ors. v. State of Kerala – (2003) 10 SCC 108.***

62. Section 34 IPC carves out an exception from general law that a person is responsible for his own act, as it provides that a person can also be held vicariously responsible for the act of others if he has the “common intention” to commit the offence. The phrase “common intention” implies a pre-arranged plan and acting in concert pursuant to the plan. Thus, the common intention must be there prior to the commission of the offence in point of time. The common intention to bring about a particular result may also well develop on the spot as between several persons, with reference to the facts of the case and circumstances existing thereto. The common intention under Section 34 IPC is to be understood in a different sense from the “same intention” or “similar intention” or “common object”. The persons having similar intention which is not the result of the pre-arranged plan cannot be held guilty of the criminal act with the aid of Section 34 IPC – *See Mohan Singh & Anr. v. State of Punjab – AIR 1963 SC 174.*

63. Before evaluating the evidence, it is equally essential to advert to the legal principles governing criminal jurisprudence. In a criminal trial, the burden lies squarely on the prosecution to prove the guilt of the accused beyond reasonable doubt. Suspicion, however strong, cannot take the place of proof *Sharad Birdhichand Sarda v. State of Maharashtra – 1984 INSC 121.*

64. An unexplained, inordinate delay in lodging an FIR or initiating investigation deprives the prosecution of spontaneity and opens the door for deliberation, embellishment, and false implication – *See*

Thulia Kali v. State of Tamil Nadu – (1972) 3 SCC 393 and Dilawar Singh v. State of Delhi – (2007) 12 SCC 641.

65. Where conviction is sought on the testimony of a sole witness, such testimony must be wholly reliable, consistent, and free from material contradictions – See ***Vedivelu Thevar v. State of Madras – 1957 INSC 38.***

66. When the defence leads positive, official documentary evidence establishing an alibi, the burden shifts to the prosecution to disprove such evidence.

67. Section 3, Interpretation-clause of the Indian Evidence Act, 1872 defines, “proved”, “disproved”, and “not proved”, as follows:

“Proved”. — A fact is said to be proved when, after considering the matters before it, the Court; either believes it to exist, or considers its existence so probable that a prudent man ought, under the circumstances of the particular case, to act upon the supposition that it exists.

“Disproved”. — A fact is said to be disproved when, after considering the matters before it, the Court either believes that it does not exist, or considers its non-existence so probable that a prudent man ought, under the circumstances of the particular case, to act upon the supposition that it does not exist.

“Not proved”. — A fact is said not to be proved when it is neither proved nor disproved.

Analysis & Findings

68. This Court has considered the rival submissions, scrutinized the testimony of witnesses, police records, forensic reports, and legal

precedents. The evaluation of evidence reveals the following critical vulnerabilities:

Fatal Unexplained 18-Month Delay in Registering FIR

69. The alleged crime took place on 09.07.2019. Police officers (PW-1 and PW-3) attended the call on the very same day at Safdarjung Hospital, recorded complainant's statement, and seized her clothes. Yet, FIR No. 06/2021 was registered only on 07.01.2021—after an extraordinary gap of 18 months. Crucially, the IO ASI Ramesh Chand (PW-2) specifically admitted in cross-examination that he had no knowledge whatsoever regarding the reasons for this massive delay. Neither the chargesheet nor any prosecution witness explains why criminal law was kept in abeyance for 1.5 years. Applying the *ratio* of ***Thulia Kali v. State of Tamil Nadu – (1972) 3 SCC 393 and Dilawar Singh v. State of Delhi – (2007) 12 SCC 641***, such unexplained delay affords ample time for consultation, deliberation, and false implication, striking at the very root of prosecution spontaneity.

Unreliability and Material Admissions of Sole Eyewitness (PW-4)

70. The prosecution case rests entirely upon the uncorroborated testimony of Smt. Renu (PW-4). However, her deposition suffers from fatal infirmities. First, the lack of direct eyewitnesses. In cross-examination, PW-4 categorically admitted that she turned around only AFTER feeling a burning sensation on her back. Thus, she did not actually see who threw the liquid upon her. Her assertion that Preet Pal was holding a bottle is a post-facto assumption.

71. Secondly, contradiction regarding crime scene. In her recalled cross-examination on 18.03.2026, PW-4 stated for the first time that the incident occurred behind Shiv Mandir, an improvement absent in her original complaint Ex. PW3/A and examination-in-chief.

72. Thirdly, contradiction regarding site plan. PW-4 specifically deposed that she never visited the crime spot again after 09.07.2019. However, the site plan (Ex.PW2/C) prepared on 08.01.2021 bears her signature at point-‘B’, exposing a serious flaw in investigative mechanics.

73. Fourthly, uncertainty of complaint authorship. PW-4 admitted she cannot read or write Hindi or English and did not draft the complaint herself, while IOs could not clarify who authored the original written text.

Absence of Independent Public Witnesses and Electronic Evidence

74. PW-4 admitted that 5 to 7 public passersby gathered immediately after the incident and poured two buckets of water on her. Despite the availability of these natural independent witnesses in a busy area, the IO (PW-2) admitted that no public witness was joined or examined. Furthermore, PW-2 admitted that no closed circuit television (CCTV) camera footage was collected from the temple or nearby shops, and no call detail records (CDR) or cell tower location data of the complainant or accused persons were obtained to verify their presence at the scene.

Non-Recovery of Physical Articles and Destruction of Case Property

75. The investigating agency failed to recover any acid bottle, container, or motorcycles allegedly used during the crime. More critically, the complainant's burnt clothes i.e., the primary physical case property were destroyed in a fire at the *malkhana Nazarat* Branch on 23.08.2024 (Report Mark A1). Consequently, the case property was never produced or identified during trial, depriving the court of direct physical inspection and prejudicing the defence.

Deep Prior Enmity, Concealment of Live-in Relationship & POCSO Acquittal

76. The prosecution projected a motive that the accused persons attacked PW-4 to force her to withdraw her earlier POCSO complaint (FIR No. 160/2019 PS Sangam Vihar) against Preet Pal. However, accused Preet Pal (DW-1) produced the certified judgment dated 28.03.2025 (Ex. DW1/B), proving that he was fully acquitted in that POCSO case after trial due to material contradictions in complainant's claims. DW-1 also proved 5 PCR call records dated 06.05.2019 (Ex. DW1/A colly), establishing that Renu and Preet Pal lived together in a live-in relationship from 2016 to 2019, which complainant falsely denied and suppressed. This deep-seated personal hostility and history of false litigation provide a compelling reason for false implication.

Unrebutted Defence Evidence of Alibi (DW-2 Ex. DW2/A)

77. Accused Ramesh (A2) and Suresh Chand (A3) set up a specific defence of alibi. They examined DW-2 Sh. Pratap Singh, former Gram Pradhan, who produced official Gram Panchayat/MNREGA records

Ex. DW2/A, proving that Ramesh and Suresh were working as laborers in Mathura, UP on 09.07.2019. The prosecution failed to cross-examine DW-2 effectively or lead any evidence to rebut these official public records, leaving their alibi completely intact.

Unproved Ingredients of Offences (Sections 326B, 195A, 506/34 IPC)

78. In view of the foregoing, the essential ingredients of Section 326B IPC remain unproved as the identity of the actual thrower is unestablished. No specific overt act is proved against Ramesh, Suresh, or Bablu. Similarly, the charges under Sections 195A and 506 IPC lack independent corroboration and fail the standard of proof beyond reasonable doubt.

Decision

79. Considering the aforesaid findings and observations, this Court holds that the prosecution has miserably failed to prove the charges under Sections 326B/34, 195A/34, and 506-II/34 IPC against any of the accused persons beyond reasonable doubt. The benefit of pervasive doubt, systemic investigative lapses, unexplained delay, and unrefuted defence evidence must inevitably extend to the accused persons.

80. **ACCORDINGLY, THE COURT ORDERS:**

80.1. The accused **Preet Pal (A1), Ramesh (A2), Suresh Chand (A3), and Bablu Kumar (A4)** are hereby acquitted of charge framed under Section 326A/34, IPC against them

in **SC No. 280/2021** arising out of FIR No. 06/2021 PS Sangam Vihar;

80.2. The accused **Preet Pal (A1), Ramesh (A2), Suresh Chand (A3)**, and **Bablu Kumar (A4)** are hereby acquitted of charge framed under Section 506-II/34, IPC, against them in **SC No. 280/2021** arising out of FIR No. 06/2021 PS Sangam Vihar and

80.3. The accused **Preet Pal (A1), Ramesh (A2), Suresh Chand (A3)**, and **Bablu Kumar (A4)** are hereby acquitted of charge framed under Section 195A/34, IPC, against them in **SC No. 280/2021** arising out of FIR No. 06/2021 PS Sangam Vihar.

81. All pending interim application(s), if any, are disposed of. Bail bonds of accused persons on bail stand discharged. Sureties are released. All accused persons are set at liberty.

82. Further, liberty is granted to the sureties, to collect their relevant documents against display of proper identification via government issued documents and acknowledgment.

83. Further, all the accused persons are directed to execute personal bonds in the sum of ₹10,000/- each with one surety in like amount in compliance with Section 437A CrPC / Section 481 BNSS, to remain in force for a period of six months. Let the needful be done within five days from the pronouncement of judgment in accordance with law.

84. File be consigned to Record Room after due compliance.

**Pronounced in the open Court
on September 28, 2026**

**(Hargurvarinder Singh Jaggi)
Addl. Sessions Judge (FTC-01)
South District
Saket Courts, New Delhi**

***Note:** This judgment comprises of 39 pages in total. The electronic signature certificate (digital signature) of the Presiding Officer has been appended on the page number 33 of the electronic or digital copy (PDF) of this document.*

FORM-C

List of Prosecution / Defence / Court Witnesses

A. Prosecution

S.No.	Rank	Name	Nature of Evidence (Eyewitness, Police Witness, Expert Witness, Medical Witness, Panch Witness, Other Witness)
1.	PW-1	W/HC Anita	Police Witness (Witness to seizure of complainant's wearing clothes at Safdarjung Hospital vide memo Ex. PW1/A)
2.	PW-2	ASI Ramesh Chand	Police Witness / Investigating Officer (Prepared rukka Ex. PW2/B, site plan Ex. PW2/C, arrest memo Ex. PW2/E, & filed chargesheet)
3.	PW-3	SI Mahipal Singh	Police Witness / Initial IO (Attended DD No. 61A on 09.07.2019, recorded complaint Ex. PW3/A, seized clothes, deposited in malkhana)
4.	PW-4	Smt. Renu	Eyewitness / Complainant / Victim (Deposed regarding alleged acid attack incident dated 09.07.2019)
5.	PW-5	Dr. Kanak Lata Verma	Expert Witness (Assistant Director, RFSL Chanakyapuri; proved FSL chemical analysis report Ex. PW5/A confirming Hydrochloric Acid)
6.	PW-6	ASI Vijay Pal	Police Witness (Duty Officer; proved registration of FIR Ex. PW6/A and Section 65B Certificate Ex. PW6/C)

S.No.	Rank	Name	Nature of Evidence (Eyewitness, Police Witness, Expert Witness, Medical Witness, Panch Witness, Other Witness)
7.	PW-7	ASI Devraj	Police Witness (Joined investigation and formal proceedings with IO)
8.	PW-8	SI Raghuraj Singh	Police Witness (Served notices u/s 41A CrPC on co-accused Ramesh, Suresh Chand, and Bablu Kumar vide Ex.PW8/A (Colly.))

B. Defence Witnesses

S.No.	Rank	Name	Nature of Evidence (Eyewitness, Police Witness, Expert Witness, Medical Witness, Panch Witness, Other Witness)
1.	DW-1	Sh. Preet Pal (Accused A1)	Defence Witness / Accused (Deposed on oath; proved certified PCR call records Ex. DW1/A establishing live-in relationship/disputes and POCSO Acquittal Judgment Ex. DW1/B)
2.	DW-2	Sh. Pratap Singh	Other Witness / Defence Witness (Former Gram Pradhan, Village Bharau Garh, Mathura, UP; proved official MNREGA attendance records Ex. DW2/A establishing alibi of A2 and A3)

C. Court Witnesses

S.No.	Rank	Name	Nature of Evidence (Eyewitness, Police Witness, Expert Witness, Medical Witness, Panch Witness, Other Witness)
1.	CW-1 / Court Witness	Sh. Tejram (Sr. Assistant, SDM Office, Nazarat Branch)	Other Witness / Official Witness (Summoned by Court; produced official SDM report Mark A1 regarding destruction of case property in malkhana fire on 23.08.2024) <i>Note: See testimony of PW-4 dated 18.03.2026.</i>

List of Prosecution / Defence / Court Exhibits

A. Prosecution Exhibits

S.No.	Exhibit Number	Description
1.	Exhibit P-1/PW1 (Ex. PW1/A)	Seizure Memo of wearing clothes (green suit, maroon salwar, black & maroon chunni) of complainant Smt. Renu, prepared by SI Mahipal at Safdarjung Hospital
2.	Exhibit P-1/PW2 (Ex. PW2/A)	Endorsement and proceedings of IO ASI Ramesh Chand upon receipt of case file
3.	Exhibit P-2/PW2 (Ex. PW2/B)	Rukka prepared by IO ASI Ramesh Chand on 07.01.2021 for registration of FIR No. 06/2021 PS Sangam Vihar
4.	Exhibit P-3/PW2 (Ex. PW2/C)	Site Plan of the place of occurrence prepared by ASI Ramesh Chand at the instance of complainant Smt. Renu
5.	Exhibit P-4/PW2 (Ex. PW2/D)	Arrest Memo of accused Preet Pal (A1) executed by ASI Ramesh Chand on 22.03.2021
6.	Exhibit P-5/PW2 (Ex. PW2/E)	Personal Search Memo of accused Preet Pal (A1) executed by ASI Ramesh Chand
7.	Exhibit P-1/PW3 (Ex. PW3/A)	Original Complaint / Statement of Smt. Renu recorded by SI Mahipal Singh at Safdarjung Hospital on 09.07.2019
8.	Exhibit P-2/PW3 (Ex. PW3/B)	Medico-Legal Certificate (MLC No. 8765/2019) of Smt. Renu issued by Safdarjung Hospital noting 1% chemical burn injury
9.	Exhibit P-1/PW5 (Ex. PW5/A)	Forensic Science Laboratory (RFSL Chanakyapuri) Chemical Examination Report dated 21.10.2019 proved by Dr.

S.No.	Exhibit Number	Description
		Kanak Lata Verma confirming Hydrochloric Acid
10.	Exhibit P-1/PW6 (Ex. PW6/A)	Computerized Copy of FIR No. 06/2021 registered at PS Sangam Vihar u/s 324/195A/506/34 IPC
11.	Exhibit P-2/PW6 (Ex. PW6/B)	DD No. 61A dated 09.07.2019 recorded at PS Sangam Vihar regarding the initial acid attack PCR call
12.	Exhibit P-3/PW6 (Ex. PW6/C)	Certificate under Section 65B of the Indian Evidence Act, 1872 in support of computerized FIR Ex. PW6/A
13.	Exhibit P-1/PW8 (Ex. PW8/A colly)	Notices served under Section 41A CrPC upon accused Ramesh (A2), Suresh Chand (A3), and Bablu Kumar (A4) by SI Raghuraj Singh

B. Defence Exhibits

S.No.	Exhibit Number	Description
1.	Exhibit D-1/DW1 (Ex. DW1/A colly)	Certified copies of 5 PCR Call Records dated 06.05.2019 (DD Nos. 127, 129, 138, 139, 149) establishing domestic disputes between Preet Pal and Renu during live-in relationship
2.	Exhibit D-2/DW1 (Ex. DW1/B)	Certified Copy of Judgment of Acquittal dated 28.03.2025 in FIR No. 160/2019 PS Sangam Vihar u/s 376/506 IPC & POCSO Act, acquitting accused Preet Pal
3.	Exhibit D-1/DW2 (Ex. DW2/A)	Certified Copy of Official Gram Panchayat / MNREGA Muster Roll & Attendance Register of Village Bharau Garh, Mathura,

		UP proving alibi of Ramesh (A2) and Suresh Chand (A3) on 09.07.2019
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C. Court Exhibits

S.No.	Exhibit Number	Description
1.	Exhibit C-1/CW1 (Mark A1)	Official Report and Record (F.No.1/SDM(M)/Nazarat Report/2024/211 dated 27.03.2025) produced by Sh. Tejram, Sr. Assistant, SDM Office (Nazarat Branch), South District, confirming destruction of case property (clothes) in malkhana fire on 23.08.2024

D. Material Objects

S.No.	Material Object Number	Description
1.	MO1	Sealed Pullanda containing green suit of complainant Smt. Renu bearing chemical burn stains (Destroyed in Malkhana Nazarat Branch fire on 23.08.2024 as per Mark A1)
2.	MO2	Sealed Pullanda containing maroon salwar of complainant Smt. Renu (Destroyed in Malkhana Nazarat Branch fire on 23.08.2024 as per Mark A1)
3.	MO3	Sealed Pullanda containing black & maroon chunni of complainant Smt. Renu (Destroyed in Malkhana Nazarat Branch fire on 23.08.2024 as per Mark A1)

END OF DOCUMENT
