

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT PATNA
Civil Writ Jurisdiction Case No.12297 of 2026

CNR No. BRHC010840992026

=====

Pawani Prabha, D/o- Raman Kumar Singh, Resident of G.P. Verma Lane,
Mohalla- Mundichak, Bhagalpur, P.S- Tilka Manjhi, District- Bhagalpur.

... .. Petitioner/s

Versus

1. The Union of India through its Secretary, Higher Education, Ministry of Education, New Delhi.
2. The Director General, National Testing Agency, 1st Floor, NSIC- MDBP Building, Okhla Industrial Estate, New Delhi-110020.
3. The Chairman, National Medical Commission, Pocket-14, Sector-8, Dwarka Phase-1, New Delhi-110077, India.
4. The Secretary, National Medical Commission, Pocket-14, Sector -8, Dwarka Phase-1, New Delhi-110077, India.

... .. Respondent/s

with

Civil Writ Jurisdiction Case No. 11735 of 2026

CNR No. BRHC010840992026

=====

Priya Kumari D/o Sudhanshu Kumar, Resident of Village- Rupas Mahaji,
P.O.- Gyaspur Mahaji, P.S. Salimpur, District- Patna.

... .. Petitioner/s

Versus

1. The Union of India Ministry of Education (Higher Education) through its Secretary, Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi-110001.
2. The Secretary, Ministry of Education (Higher Education), Union of India, Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi-110001.
3. The National Testing Agency, through its Chair Person, 1st Floor, NSIC- MDBP Building, Okhla Industrial Estate, P.S.- Kalkaji, New Delhi- 110020.
4. The Director General, National Testing Agency, 1st Floor, NSIC- MDBP Building, Okhla Industrial Estate, P.S.- Kalkaji, New Delhi- 110020.
5. The Director, National Testing Agency, 1st Floor, NSIC- MDBP Building, Okhla Industrial Estate, P.S.- Kalkaji, New Delhi- 110020.
6. The Secretary, National Testing Agency, 1st Floor, NSIC- MDBP Building, Okhla Industrial Estate, P.S.- Kalkaji, New Delhi- 110020.

... .. Respondent/s

with

Civil Writ Jurisdiction Case No. 12371 of 2026



CNR No. BRHC010840992026

Nisha Kumari D/o- Binod Kumar, Resident of Moti Shailesh Block Road,
P.O.- Rajgir, P.S.- Rajgir, District- Nalanda, Bihar- 803116.

... .. Petitioner/s

Versus

1. The Union of India through the Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, Nirman Bhawan, New Delhi.
2. National Testing Agency (NTA), through its Director General, NSIC-MDC, 1st Floor, Okhla Industrial Estate, New Delhi- 110020.
3. Director General/ Chairman, NTA National Testing Agency, New Delhi.
4. Medical Counselling Committee (MCC), Through its Chairman/Secretary, Directorate General of Health Services, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, New Delhi.
5. The Nalanda College, Nalanda, through its Principal, Biharsharif at Nalanda.
6. The Principal, Nalanda College Nalanda at Biharsharif.
7. The Centre Suprentendent, Centre No. 1505102- Nalanda College- Block A, Near Nagar Nigam, Garhpar, Near Civil Court, Biharsharif, Nalanda.
8. National Medical Commission, through its Secretary, Sec-10, Dwarka, Delhi.

... .. Respondent/s

Appearance :

(In Civil Writ Jurisdiction Case No. 12297 of 2026)

For the Petitioner/s : Mr. Santosh Kumar Pandey, Advocate
For the UOI : Mr. Awadhesh Kr. Pandey, Sr., CGC)
Mr. Lokesh, Adv.

For the N.M.C : Mr. Sriram Krishna, Advocate (Sr. SC)
For the NTA : Ms. Chhaya Kirti, Advocate

(In Civil Writ Jurisdiction Case No. 11735 of 2026)

For the Petitioner/s : Mr. Sanjay Kumar, Advocate
For the Respondent/s : Mr. Rahul Deo Varman, CGC

(In Civil Writ Jurisdiction Case No. 12371 of 2026)

For the Petitioner/s : Mr. Prashant Kumar, Advocate
Mr. Pramod Kr. Yadav, Adv.
For the Respondent/s : Mr. Additional Solicitor General
For the NTA : Ms. Chhaya Kirti, Advocate
For the N.M.C : Mr. Kumar Priya Ranjan, SC
: Mr. Sudarshan Bharadwaj, Advocate
Mr. Sandeep Kumar, Advocate

CORAM: HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE HARISH KUMAR
ORAL JUDGMENT

Date : 05-10-2026



Heard the parties.

2. The petitioners are bona fide students aspiring to pursue the MBBS course and had appeared in the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (Undergraduate) 2026 (NEET-UG 2026) conducted by the National Testing Agency (hereinafter referred to as the “NTA”), and in substance, as their grievances are identical, all these writ petitions have been heard together with the consent of the parties and are being disposed of by this common order.

3. For proper appreciation of the matter and for consideration of the reliefs sought for in the writ petitions, this Court deems it apt and proper to take note of the facts of each cases separately.

Re: CWJC No. 12297 of 2026

4. In the instant writ petition, filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India, the petitioner has sought a direction upon the second respondent to recalculate/reverify the percentile marks of the petitioner, who had obtained 622 marks in the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (hereinafter referred to as the “NEET”) (UG) 2026 and had a rank of 2500 under GEN-EWS. However, upon application of the percentile formula, the



percentile score of the petitioner was declared as 11.2376900, her total marks were reduced to 81 out of 720, and her category rank was downgraded to 143568, resulting in her not being shortlisted for admission to any Government Medical College.

5. In the aforesaid backdrop, a further direction has been sought for quashing of the scorecard of the petitioner in NEET (UG) 2026, taking into consideration that she had obtained 622 marks, which were subsequently reduced to 81, and that her category-wise rank was consequently inflated from 2500 to 143568.

6. A further direction has also been sought for production of the original OMR sheet as well as the answer sheet so that the actual marks obtained by the petitioner may be verified for proper adjudication and determination of her ranking.

Re: CWJC No. 11735 of 2026

7. The petitioner in the present case has invoked the jurisdiction of this Court seeking a direction for production of the original as well as the carbon copy (duplicate) of her OMR sheet bearing Answer Sheet Number 265599653, so that an objective opinion may be obtained, as it is the submission of the



petitioner that her OMR sheet was changed during the course of its evaluation.

8. A further direction has also been sought for that, upon production of the OMR sheet of the petitioner, if her contention is found to be correct, appropriate action be taken and the petitioner be declared a successful candidate in NEET-UG 2026.

9. As per the contention of the petitioner, she attempted 169 questions out of 180 and legitimately expected to secure 560 marks as per the answer key uploaded by the respondent NTA on its website. However, to her utter surprise, when the OMR sheet of the petitioner was uploaded on the website of the respondent NTA on 13.07.2026, she came to know that marks had been awarded to her for only 33 questions.

Re: CWJC No. 12371 of 2026

10. By the instant petition, the petitioner, invoking the jurisdiction of this Court, seeks quashing of the altered result of the petitioner dated 17.07.2026, duly downloaded at 10:51:18, insofar as it shows 194 marks, and further seeks a direction to the respondents to re-verify the petitioner's NEET-UG 2026 result and restore the correct marks, rank and category rank after



proper verification.

11. The result of the petitioner, as stated, was declared on 16.07.2026 and, on 17.07.2026 at 00:55:49, when the result of the petitioner was accessed, it was found on the official portal of the NTA that she had obtained 611 marks with NEET All India Rank 79459 and Category Rank 5532. However, immediately thereafter, the result was allegedly altered on the official portal and the marks were reduced to 194, with NEET All India Rank 1098925 and Category Rank 472325, which is stated to be wholly inconsistent and erroneous and, according to the petitioner, amounts to a fraud upon her.

12. This Court, upon noticing the grievances raised before it, which primarily rest upon the scorecards annexed to the writ petitions, and said to have been uploaded by them before changing/altering the same, and on the basis whereof it is claimed that the petitioners had secured higher marks which were subsequently altered, and further that the petitioners had attempted substantially more questions out of the total 180 questions and, upon proper verification with reference to the answer key uploaded by the NTA, were expecting substantially higher marks, whereas unexpectedly they were awarded much



lesser marks; the petitioners have raised serious doubts regarding the genuineness of the OMR sheets. Multifold submissions have also been advanced by the learned Advocates for the respective students-petitioners that there is a deep-rooted conspiracy and manipulation on the part of the respondent National Testing Agency, and apprehension has been expressed that there is every likelihood that the original OMR sheets of the petitioners have either been replaced or altered in a clandestine manner.

13. To answer all these issues, and considering that the petitioners are young aspirants of the NEET examination and that their careers are at stake, this Court, in order to resolve the dispute, by order dated 17.08.2026, directed the respondent authorities of the NTA to produce the original OMR sheets of the respective petitioners along with the counter affidavit in each of the cases.

14. In deference to the order of this Court, the Senior Superintendent of the National Testing Agency submitted sealed envelopes containing the original OMR sheets of the respective candidates on 27.08.2026. Upon opening the sealed envelopes, the respective OMR sheets were shown to the petitioners along



with their Advocates. On perusal of the respective OMR sheets, the petitioners categorically stated that the OMR sheets/answer sheets so produced did not belong to them and, in fact, had never been filled up by them. All the petitioners categorically disputed the genuineness of the said OMR answer sheets and stated that the signatures appearing thereon were not their signatures.

15. Faced with such a situation, this Court, in order to effectively resolve the dispute, further directed the respondent National Testing Agency to ensure filing of its response separately in each of the cases. Accordingly, counter affidavits on behalf of the agency, as well as rejoinder affidavits to the counter affidavits, have also been filed in each of the cases.

16. Since the grievances in the two writ petitions bearing CWJC No. 12297 of 2026 and CWJC No. 12371 of 2026 are similar, *inter alia*, that the petitioners whereof had secured substantively higher marks which were subsequently reduced to minimal marks, resulting in downgrading of their category ranks, similar submissions have been advanced while assailing the alleged action of the NTA in reducing their marks.

17. Learned Advocates for the petitioners, pressing the



above-referred writ petitions, have categorically submitted that, undisputedly, the advertisement was circulated on 08.02.2026 inviting online application forms and the petitioners, being found eligible, submitted their duly filled-up application forms within the prescribed time and downloaded the same. Upon the application forms being found in order, admit cards were issued to the petitioners and, accordingly, they appeared in the examination. However, owing to a paper leakage scam, which shook the nation, the NTA was compelled to cancel the previous entrance examination.

18. Subsequently, fresh admit cards were issued fixing a new examination date, and the petitioners also appeared in the said examination.

19. The petitioners before this Court had done their best and were expecting good results. Accordingly, when the scorecards were uploaded on the website of the NTA on 16.07.2026, they were happy and satisfied with the marks reflected therein.

20. However, to their utter surprise, their marks were all of a sudden reduced. In the case of CWJC No. 12297 of 2026, the marks shown as 622 out of 720 on 16.07.2026 were



reduced to 81 after the passage of almost 10 days, on 28.07.2026, whereas in C.W.J.C. No. 12371 of 2026, the marks shown as 611 on 17.07.2026 were reduced to 194 after about 10 hours.

21. Adverting to the aforesaid facts, it is submitted that, upon noticing such discrepancies in the scorecards, the petitioner immediately sent an email bringing the entire facts to the knowledge of the authorities. However, neither was any correction made nor was any action taken. The question raised is as to how an uploaded scorecard of the petitioner could have been changed, and thus it is argued and alleged that the NTA had not conducted the examination fairly and impartially, resulting in such discrepancies, and that the entire examination process is, therefore, defective.

22. The petitioners in all the cases have submitted that the earlier scorecards, which have been placed on record by filing the writ petitions, cannot be ignored in such a casual manner without any expert opinion, particularly in view of the fact that the scorecards were reflected on the website of the NTA, from where the petitioners took screenshots, downloaded the same and also scanned the QR code appearing on the



scorecards.

23. In support of the aforesaid contention, it is further submitted that the petitioners logged in to the website of the NTA/NEET-UG and successfully downloaded their scorecards. However, suddenly, what happened to the website of the NTA is unknown to them, and when the petitioners again visited the website and scanned the QR code of the downloaded result, the same was found to be non-functional. Thereafter, the petitioners again logged in using their respective IDs and passwords and succeeded in downloading their results, whereupon they were surprised to see that their marks had decreased multifold. According to the petitioners, the aforesaid facts could very well be verified from the history of the Google server logs and the downloaded files available on their electronic devices.

24. Referring to the OMR sheets which were duly produced for perusal of the students/petitioners in the presence of their respective Advocates, it is further argued that the said OMR sheets do not belong to the petitioners, inter alia, for the reason that there are certain overwritings. At the bottom-left side of the OMR sheet, there are required to be two signatures of the candidate. In one of the OMR sheets in CWJC No. 12297 of



2026, there is only one signature of the petitioner and the other is missing. Moreover, the petitioners claim that they had attempted a substantially higher number of questions, but upon perusal of the OMR sheets, it was revealed that the total number of questions attempted by the petitioners had been reduced to a minimal number. The particular questions attempted or left unanswered by the petitioners also do not match with the OMR sheets. The petitioners are also ready to produce their electronic devices before the Court or any agency so that the same may be verified or examined by an expert to establish whether the scorecards were actually downloaded from the website of the NTA/NEET on the relevant dates and times.

25. Referring to a judgment in the case of ***National Testing Agency Vs. K.S. Manoj (Minor) & Ors; W.A. No. 1221 of 2021 and C.M.P. No. 7816 of 2021***, it is further argued that, in similar circumstances, the Hon'ble Bench of Madras High Court found that a thorough inquiry was required and, taking the issue very seriously since the candidates are future doctors and precious lives are involved, allowed the candidate to participate in the counselling subject to the final outcome of the writ petition.



26. In C.W.J.C. No. 11735 of 2026, learned Advocate for the petitioner submitted that the OMR sheet so displayed to the petitioner does not belong to her. It is contended that the petitioner had attempted 169 questions out of 180 questions and, after the answer key was uploaded, the petitioner found that the answers to almost 140 questions were correct and, therefore, legitimately expected to secure 560 marks out of 720. However, when the scanned copy of the OMR sheet was uploaded on the website of the NTA on 13.07.2026, the petitioner found that only 33 questions had been marked. It is categorically submitted that the OMR sheet is not the original but a scanned copy thereof and, moreover, on a bare perusal of the same, it appears that only 33 bubbles were marked on the OMR sheet, which, according to the petitioner, does not inspire confidence with regard to the impartiality and transparency of the prime institution, NTA. The apprehension of the petitioner is stated to be not ill-founded after seeing the OMR sheet on the website of the NTA. The petitioner demands that the OMR sheet produced by the NTA be sent for forensic examination at CFSL, Hyderabad, along with a sample of her signature and handwriting before a fingerprint expert, to ascertain the veracity and correctness of the statements made by the NTA. The



petitioner also asserts that the signature and handwriting available on the attendance sheet and OMR sheet are neither similar nor identical, rather there is a difference between them. Various other minute submissions have also been made in order to point out discrepancies in the original OMR.

27. Per contra, Ms. Chhaya Kirti, learned Advocate for the National Testing Agency, referring to the counter affidavits filed in each case separately, has submitted that the purported scorecards brought on record by the petitioners are manipulated and do not correspond with the official records of the answering respondent and, in fact, the same do not even exist in the records of the NTA.

28. The OMR answer sheet contains the name, signature and thumb impression of the petitioners; the names of the father and mother of the candidate/petitioner; the signatures of the invigilators; and the answers attempted by the petitioner. The same were duly received, scanned and evaluated in a fully secured environment at the NTA headquarters in New Delhi.

29. Through a public notice dated 13.07.2026, challenges to the OMR answer sheet were invited from aggrieved candidates within a stipulated period. However, the



petitioners in CWJC No. 12297 of 2026 and CWJC No. 12371 of 2026 did not challenge the OMR sheets within the window provided, whereas the petitioner in CWJC No. 11735 of 2026 submitted her challenge only in respect of question number 1, upon payment of the requisite fee of Rs. 200, within the window provided. In this regard, it is informed that the petitioner had not even attempted or answered question number 1 in the said OMR answer sheet.

30. As per the calculation sheet of marks prepared on the basis of the performance/answers of the candidates recorded on the OMR answer sheet, the final answer key of the test booklet code and the applicable marking scheme, the petitioners were awarded marks in accordance with the answers given in the OMR sheets. Upon scanning the QR code on the scorecards enclosed by the petitioners, subsequent to the earlier one, the same only connects to the original scorecard issued by the answering respondents. The NIC, an independent agency, also clarified that only one OMR sheet had been uploaded in respect of the petitioners on the NIC server and that there had been no change to the OMR sheets as on date. It has further been certified by the NIC that the result data of the petitioners were



uploaded on the NIC server only once, on 16.07.2026, and that there had been no change in the scorecards of the petitioners since such uploading. Thus, it is contended that the claim of the petitioners in CWJC No. 12297 of 2026 and CWJC No. 12371 of 2026 of having viewed/received second scorecards at different times and of securing higher marks at the first instance which were subsequently altered and reduced to minimal marks are not bona fide claims, but are based upon forged scorecards.

31. It is further contended with all vehemence that, in no possibility, can two candidates have the same rank with different scores, as it is seen in the instant case that the two candidates have secured the ranks which are claimed by the petitioners in the aforesaid cases, and therefore, scorecards showing the same rank with different scores are not reliable and are unsustainable. It is specifically contended that all candidates, including the petitioners, were treated equally under the same process. The petitioners were awarded marks strictly on the basis of their performance/answers given in the OMR sheets.

32. Placing reliance upon a decision rendered by a coordinate Bench in *Gaurav Jaiswal (Through His Legal Guardian) Vs. Union of India & Ors. [W.P.(C) 6838/2020]*, as



also the decision rendered by the Hon'ble High Court of Delhi in ***Tanishq Mishra Vrs. NTA & Ors. [W.P.(C) No. 11860/2022]***, it is submitted that the present case involves false averments. In the best case scenario for the petitioners, they have raised a disputed question of fact which cannot be adjudicated in writ proceedings.

33. Ms. Chhaya Kirti, learned Advocate, further argued that there is a presumption of correctness under Section 114 of the Indian Evidence Act in respect of official records maintained by the State. The presumption, therefore, lies in favour of the NTA and no doubt can be raised regarding the authenticity of such documents unless the same is rebutted by concrete material or evidence. The aforesaid observation is said to have been pronounced in the case of ***Selishia Mohandas Vs. Union of India & Ors. [W.P.(C) No. 10089/2023]*** by the Hon'ble Delhi High Court. Various other decisions of different High Courts have also been relied upon. Lastly, it is contended that if the claims of the petitioners are permitted without any cogent concrete material and solely on the basis of the purported forged score card retained by them, it would open the floodgates to further challenges and would question the credibility of the



NTA, which is not permissible in the eyes of law.

34. To support the aforesaid contention, reliance has also been placed on a Division Bench decision of the Bombay High Court at Nagpur Bench in *Aatmaja Vs. Union of India* [W.P. No. 5702/2026] and *Riza Safa Vs. Union of India & Ors.* [W.P. No. 18301/2026] by the Hon'ble Calcutta High Court.

35. This Court has meticulously heard the learned Advocates for the respective parties and also perused the materials available on record, as well as the original OMR answer sheets produced before this Court by the Senior Superintendent of the National Testing Agency. Before coming to the facts of the present cases, it would be pertinent to observe that a national entrance examination is undoubtedly a trust-based administrative exercise. Lakhs and lakhs of students, after devoting their day and night for years, appear in the examination on the assumption that the system will preserve their answers accurately, evaluate them in accordance with predetermined rules and publish the scorecards fairly.

36. However, when such a system is questioned, transparency becomes indispensable. The litigation may, therefore, have significance beyond the fate of an individual



candidate. In such circumstances, the examination authorities are bound to demonstrate robust preservation of physical and electronic records so as to encourage stronger protocols for OMR custody, scanning, database controls, auditability and dispute resolution.

37. The dispute in such cases may not necessarily be whether the candidates actually scored higher marks as claimed or otherwise, but whether the examination authority is able to satisfy the Court by producing a credible, continuous and verifiable evidentiary trail connecting the candidates who entered the examination hall, the OMR sheets allegedly filled by them, the digital images generated therefrom, the marks calculated on the basis thereof, and the scores ultimately published. The NTA is duty-bound and obliged to demonstrate its bona fides through proper documentation and a technically verifiable explanation. At the same time, the Court, in such circumstances, has a constitutional obligation to ensure that public examination processes remain fair, transparent and non-arbitrary, while also maintaining judicial restraint in academic matters.

38. To answer the issues raised before this Court in all



these writ petitions, it would be appropriate to take note of the relevant decisions which also throw light upon the present issue. In ***Tahazeen Kosar Sheikh Vs. NTA & Ors.***, the High Court of Rajasthan at Jaipur Bench, in S.B. Civil Writ Petition No. 15767 of 2026, considered a case where a candidate sought to challenge the marks obtained by her in the NEET UG Examination 2026 on the similar ground that she had been awarded 480 marks, whereas she claimed that she deserved 600 or more marks out of 720. The Court categorically rejected the bona fides of the candidate in raising the claim that her answer sheet had not been properly evaluated by the NTA or had been tampered with or manipulated, referring to the decision rendered in ***Prabhnoor Singh & Ors. Vs. National Testing Agency & Ors., MANU/SCOR/06459/2022***, and ***Selishia Mohandas Vs. Union of India & Ors., MANU/DE/5250/2023***, and dismissed the writ petition. This Court deems it proper to recapitulate paragraph number 13 of the said judgment, which, *inter alia*, dealt with the above-referred cases.

*“13. The two judgments referred by the counsel for NTA, do support NTA and do suggest for not granting indulgence in the matter i.e. (i) ***Prabhnoor Singh Vs. National Testing Agency*** decided on 10.01.2022 reported in ***MANU/SCOR/06459/2022*** & (ii) ***Selishia****



Mohandas Vs. Union of India & Ors. decided on 11.08.2023 and reported in MANU/DE/5250/2023, wherein reliance has been placed on para Nos.17 to 21, which reads as under:

"17. Respondent no.2-NTA which is a Government Agency conducts examination where lakhs of candidates appear. In the current year of 2023, more than 20 lakhs candidates appeared.

18. The specific submissions have been made by respondent no.2-NTA in its counter affidavit and the original OMR sheet has also been presented. The record produced by the respondents is the official record. There is no reason to doubt the genuineness of the same.

19. There is a presumption in favour of the official record in terms of Section 114 of the Indian Evidence Act, 1872. In absence of any concrete document to rebut the presumption, the correctness of the official record cannot be doubted.

20. There is no reason to believe that respondent no.2-NTA would fabricate or replace the marks obtained by any of the candidates. Respondentno.2- NTA has no personal stake.

21. This court, in the case titled as 'MANTASHA ASGHAR VS. UNION OF INDIA & ORS.' in W.P(C) 8863/2023 had dealt with a similar case and while dismissing the petition held the following in paragraph Nos. 4, 5, 6, and 7:-

"4. The petitioner, who is also present in person does admits that she has signed the said OMR sheet. She, however, states that the OMR sheet has been replaced.

5. This court is of the considered opinion that such an allegation cannot be entertained in the instant writ petition as the same



appears to be an afterthought and is not supported by any evidence. There is no overwriting in the OMR sheet to believe that the answers attempted were tempered with.

6. This court, in Shreya Yadav v. National Testing Agency, had dealt with a similar case and while dismissing the petition, held the following in paragraph Nos. 12 and 13:

"12. That said, the foundation of the prayers sought in the present petition is purely based on conjectures and surmises. Petitioners' reliance on the orders passed in their pending writs is misplaced, as there is no conclusive determination therein that OMR sheets of Petitioners have been tampered with. The Division Bench of this Court has also not accepted such a plea. Based on some bitter experiences, it cannot be inferred that there is a 'leak' in the examination system of the Respondent. Merely because Petitioners' results were not as they had expected, the Court cannot conclude that there has been tampering of OMR sheets or that the same would occur in the future. is Petitioners' belief unsubstantiated and whimsical. The allegations pertaining to the previous years is a disputed and contested fact that has not been established in the court of law. Mr. Kumar has also made a bold statement across the bar, stating that the Petitioners would surrender their seats if they do not make it to the list of top-10 rank



holders. The court is unimpressed with such frivolous theatrics. This statement is made purely to sway the Court on emotions. That said, the court wishes the very best for them and hopes that they come out with flying colours in the examinations. 13. The upshot of the above discussion is that the instant petitions lack a valid cause of action, and there is no demonstrable breach of any fundamental or legal right to seek the reliefs claimed, which is a prerequisite for the court to entertain a writ petition."

7. In the instant case, there is no reason to believe that respondent no.3-NTA which has conducted the examination would particularly fabricate the answer/OMR sheet of a particular student.""

39. Coming to a case where a candidate calls in question the legality, correctness and propriety of the action of the respondent NTA in publishing an incorrect and inconsistent scanned OMR answer sheet in respect of her NEET UG 2026 examination, involving an erroneous evaluation of her performance and award of only 159 marks, in the case of ***Pihu Singh Vs. Union of India & Ors, W.P.(C) No. 3848 of 2026***, the Division Bench of the High Court of Chhattisgarh at Bilaspur has held that the jurisdiction of the High Court under Article 226 of the Constitution of India, though wide, is required to be exercised with restraint in matters concerning academic and



competitive examinations, unless the decision-making process is shown to be arbitrary, irrational, discriminatory, mala fide or demonstrably contrary to the prescribed procedures. The Court ought not to interfere with the evaluation undertaken by an expert examining body. The Court further pointed out that the claim of the candidate that she had attempted all 180 questions could not be accepted in preference to the responses actually recorded in the original OMR answer sheet, particularly when the said original document had been produced before the Court and shown to the petitioner herself. The award of 159 marks based upon 46 correct and 25 incorrect responses out of 71 attempted questions, therefore, called for no interference.

40. A Division Bench of the Bombay High Court, Nagpur Bench at Nagpur, in the case of *Aatmaja Vs. Union of India, (Writ Petition No. 5702 of 2026)*, vide its order dated 4th August, 2026, considered a case where a candidate had approached the Court seeking a direction upon the respondent NTA to produce the original OMR sheet so that she could verify her answer sheet with the answer key published by the respondent, raising a grievance that there was every possibility that the scanned OMR sheet had been manipulated, and, more



particularly, that the OMR sheet produced pursuant to the direction of the Court was alleged not to belong to her. Since the petitioner had secured only 117 marks out of 720, whereas she expected to secure 604 marks, the claim of such candidate was negated in view of Clause 15.4 of the Information Bulletin published by the respondent National Testing Agency.

41. To answer the issues, it would also be gainful to quote paragraph number 8 of the aforesaid decision, which would guide this Court in arriving at a definite conclusion while answering the question posed before it:

“8. So far as the contention raised by the petitioner regarding manipulation of her OMR answer sheet by respondent No.2 is concerned, we fail to understand as to what prejudice respondent No.2 would have against the petitioner so as to manipulate her answer sheet. This Court, in Writ Petition No. 7439 of 2021, decided on 1st November, 2021, in similar circumstances, has held that such a contention raised by the petitioner regarding manipulation of the OMR answer sheet and consequential re-evaluation deserves to be rejected for the reasons recorded in paragraphs 10, 11 and 12, which read thus:

"10. The above scanned answer sheet bears the roll number of the Petitioner, her test booklet number, her name, the name of her parents, her left thumb impression, the signature of invigilators with time and the declaration which admittedly bears her signature and reads thus :

"DECLARATION BY CANDIDATE:



I declare that particulars and signature on this OMR Answer Sheet are mine and are same as in Attendance Sheet. I further declare that particulars filled in and signature as well as the circles darkened on this ORIGINAL Copy is same as in OFFICE Copy.

Sd/-1.55pm

Signature with time and running handwriting."

11. With all the above admitted material on the scanned scanned OMR answer-sheet are not correct only because the answer sheet, we are not willing to accept that the answers on the Petitioner states that the answers circled by her on the question paper retained by her has different answers. It cannot be ruled out that any student can fill up the test booklet (question paper) at home and after filling up the correct answers in the manner they desire, on the strength of such markings on the question paper/test booklet, come forward and contend that the answers on the scanned copy of the OMR are incorrect, since the answers on the answer paper retained by the student does not match with the answers/markings which the candidate has made/carried out on the test booklet. If this is allowed, surely we will be opening the flood gates for students to come forward and register their grievance that their answer-sheet does not bear the answers which they had marked on their test booklet/question paper; despite the fact that the scanned answer sheet bears in their own handwriting, the roll number; test



booklet number, their name, the names of their parents, their signatures on the declaration, along with the timing, all of which are undisputed in this case by the Petitioner. In the case of Rithu Sibi (supra) relied upon by the Petitioner, the petitioner had alleged that her signature was manipulated, the roll number of the petitioner in the numerical did not tally with the bubbled portion, the name of the petitioner's mother and father was not written by the petitioner, the name of the petitioner's mother is Mini John C., however in the OMR Sheet it is shown as Mini Johna C., the writing in the OMR Sheet is not that of the petitioner. It is under such circumstances that the Learned Single Judge of the Kerala High Court directed an enquiry/investigation in the matter. The facts in the present case are completely different as compared to the case of Rithu Sibi (supra).

12. In view of the above, we are not inclined to grant the reliefs as sought by the Petitioner in exercise of our extraordinary jurisdiction under Section 226 of the Constitution of India. The above Writ Petition is therefore dismissed."

42. Recently, the High Court of Delhi, in the case of ***Bushra Naim & Ors. Vs. Union Of India & Ors., W.P.(C) No. 11792/2021 and CM APPL. 54447/2026 with other analogous cases***, vide order dated 21.08.2026, considered a case where six candidates had approached the Court seeking production and



inspection of their original/physical OMR answer sheets and other examination records. Upon production of the same, when the candidates alleged large-scale interpolation and the OMR sheets were found to be unacceptable to them, in such circumstances, the writ petitions came to be disposed of with liberty to the candidates to file a civil suit, which would be adjudicated on its own merits, considering the disputed questions of fact requiring examination of witnesses and documents in support of the respective claims.

43. A similar view has also been taken in the case of ***Tanya Sharma Vs. Union of India & Ors W.P. (C) No. 12307 of 2026 & CM APPL. 56994 of 2026***, where a Bench of the Hon'ble High Court of Delhi relegated the matter to the competent Civil Court to avail the appropriate remedy, noting that the contentions raised by the candidate would require detailed evidence.

44. This Court also considers it gainful to refer to the decision of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in the case of ***Prabhnoor Singh & Ors Vs. National Testing Agency & Ors.***, passed in ***Writ Petition (Civil) No. 1286 of 2021***, where the Hon'ble Court, with reference to Clause 13 of the Information



Bulletin containing provisions for display of OMR sheets and responses on the website or for challenging the grading of questions, vide its order dated 10.01.2022, ruled that it was not necessary to enquire into the submission of the respondent NTA that the OMR sheet annexed by the petitioners was fabricated by them. Once it was not in dispute that the original OMR sheets of five of the six petitioners had been duly verified and bore the signatures of the candidates, the Court, having regard to the contents of the counter affidavit, held that it could not prima facie be suggested that there had been any act of tampering or manipulation in the back office of the National Testing Agency. The examination had been attempted by as many as 15.44 lakh candidates, out of whom six had approached the Court. Of them, inspection of the originals was permitted to be undertaken by all of them, and the originals were inspected. The Court declined to entertain the petitions filed by the candidates alleging tampering and manipulation of marks.

45. So far as the decisions upon which reliance has been placed by the petitioners are concerned, the same are interim in nature, wherein, pending the final report or outcome of the writ petition, the candidates were allowed to participate in



the interview. As such, this Court is not persuaded to discuss upon those orders for deciding the present writ petitions.

46. Now, coming to the facts of the present cases, it is true that the petitioners are aspiring to pursue MBBS courses and that the result of NEET-UG 2026 is of considerable importance to their academic careers. This Court is also conscious that even small differences in marks may have a substantial bearing upon the prospects of a candidate in a highly competitive examination. At the same time, however, mere sympathy or possible academic consequences of the result cannot constitute a ground for directing alteration of an examination record which has been produced in original and found to contain the responses on the basis of which the petitioners have been evaluated. This Court is also conscious of the judicial restraint required to balance the individual grievance of a candidate with the larger requirement of maintaining the sanctity, uniformity and finality of the competitive examination process.

47. On a careful consideration of the original OMR sheets, this Court finds that it contains roll number, test booklet number, answer sheet number and OMR code along with name,



signature, and thumb impression of the petitioners. The OMR also contains the name of parents as well as signature of invigilator and the answer attempted by the petitioners thereon, which is said to have been duly scanned and evaluated in a secure environment at NTA headquarters.

48. The public notice dated 13.07.2026 invited challenge to OMR answer sheet during stipulated period from 13.07.2026 to 15.07.2026. However, out of the three petitioners, two of them have not even challenged the same, except the petitioner in CWJC No. 11735 of 2026, though her challenge was only with respect to question number 1. It is also not the case of the petitioners that they had anytime downloaded the OMR, which was found to their satisfaction, as asserted in the writ petition, which would have the clinching effect.

49. On the other hand, it is the case of the NTA that as per the calculation sheet of the marks prepared on the basis of the performance/answers as also after publication of final answer key, the petitioners have been correctly awarded the respective marks and the rank.

50. This Court also finds that the scanning of the QR code on the scorecard enclosed by the petitioners upon which



they are placing reliance does not bring to them the scorecard issued by the NTA, whereas the scorecards which are said to have been issued by the NTA take the petitioners to the original scorecard.

51. The letter issued by the NIC dated 25.08.2026, which has also been brought on record in the counter affidavit, clearly certified that only one OMR answer sheet was uploaded in respect of the petitioners on NIC server and there is no change to the OMR as on date. The certificates issued by the NIC also prescribe the date on which the actual results have been uploaded, which also finds differences in the date and time of the scorecard brought on record by the petitioners.

52. In such circumstances, the contention of the petitioners that the scorecard upon which they are placing reliance were downloaded from the website of NTA does not corroborate it, since the scorecard issued by the website of NTA has a unique QR code which, upon scanning, is brought to the original scorecard. This fact also requires attention, that in no possibility two candidates can have same rank having different scores, as it has been shown to us by the learned Advocate for the NTA.



53. This Court also finds that heavy reliance has been placed upon the dissimilarity between the signatures appearing on the petitioners' provisional admit cards and those appearing on the OMR answer sheets provided to them and secured on the website. Upon perusal of the signatures of the petitioners found on the admit cards as well as the OMR sheets, and comparison thereof with the signatures found on the affidavits as well as Vakalatnamas, this Court finds that the signatures are not thoroughly identical. Such dissimilarity between signatures appearing on different documents executed at different points of time, by itself, cannot be considered sufficient to hold that the OMR answer sheets had been tampered with. It is well founded and relevant to note that the handwriting and signatures of any person are subject to inherent variations. The physical and emotional state of a person at the time of subscribing a signature may also contribute to such variations. The state of mind of candidates at the time of subscribing their signatures in the examination room may, in the ordinary course, be different from that prevailing at the time of signing an admit card or other documents. Therefore, such variations in signatures, by themselves, cannot constitute a ground to contend that the OMR answer sheets had been tampered with or swapped, as sought to



be contended by the learned Advocates for the petitioners.

54. The petitioners have not ascribed any ill-will or mala fide intention to any officiating staff of the examination room to the effect that they might have tampered with or swapped the OMR sheets filled by the petitioners with the disputed OMR sheets with a view to prevent them from qualifying in the examination.

55. The National Testing Agency conducts the NEET-UG Examination on a national scale through a standardized process. Judicial interference with the evaluation process based solely upon an individual's apprehension, unsupported by convincing evidence, would adversely affect the certainty, sanctity and finality of the examination system. Merely because, by an interim order, a candidate may have been permitted to participate in counselling, subject to the final enquiry or outcome of the case on the peculiar facts and circumstances of that case, such an order does not constitute a binding precedent. Moreover, in the present cases, the petitioners have failed to establish any arbitrariness, illegality, mala fides or procedural irregularity on the part of the respondent authorities in the evaluation of their answer sheets. This Court has also perused



the original OMR sheets of all the candidates and compared the signatures of the petitioners with the signatures appearing on the attendance sheets, Vakalatnamas and affidavits and found some variation. However, as this Court has rightly observed in the foregoing paragraphs, the signatures of any candidate or person are subject to inherent variations, and such variation in signatures appearing on some documents, by itself, cannot constitute a ground to contend that the OMR sheets had been tampered with or swapped, as sought to be contended by the learned Advocates for the petitioners. If the petitioners still dispute the genuineness of the OMR sheets duly produced before this Court, in such circumstances, this Court is of the opinion that the disputed questions of fact are required to be adjudicated upon by a competent Civil Court, requiring elaborate examination of witnesses and documentary evidence to establish the respective claims.

56. Finding no illegality or infirmity on the part of the NTA and no sufficient basis to doubt the records maintained by the NTA, this Court dismisses the writ petitions, observing that the petitioners may pursue such appropriate remedy before a competent Court or authority as may be available to them, if so



advised.

57. Before parting with these cases, this Court, however, extends the best wishes for the petitioners and hopes that they come out with flying colours in next examination; and/or something more better is awaiting in their life what is already destined for them.

58. The original OMR answer sheets of the petitioners, which were produced before this Court in sealed covers and were opened and perused during the course of hearing, having served their purpose, are hereby handed over to Ms. Chhaya Kirti, learned Advocate appearing on behalf of the National Testing Agency, who shall forthwith transmit the same to the office of the NTA in accordance with the applicable procedure.

(Harish Kumar, J)

shivank/-

AFR/NAFR	AFR
CAV DATE	NA
Uploading Date	06.10.2026
Transmission Date	NA

