

**WRIT PETITION NO: 10859 of 2026**

Mahesh Gaddam and Others

...Petitioner(s)

Vs.

The Union Of India and Others

...Respondent(s)

Advocate for Petitioners:

Ms. G. Mounika appearing vice Mr.
Vinod Kumar Pemmasani

Advocate(s) for Respondent(s):

Additional Solicitor General of India-
R1

GP for Higher Education – R2

Mr. Y V Anil Kumar (Central
Government Counsel) –R3

Mr. Vivek Chandra Sekhar S. – R4

**CORAM : THE CHIEF JUSTICE LISA GILL
SRI JUSTICE NINALA JAYASURYA****DATE : 29th April 2026****LISA GILL, CJ.**

Prayer in this writ petition is for directing respondents to reopen application portal for National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (Undergraduate) 2026 (for short 'NEET UG 2026') by providing a special one-time window or in the alternate, permit submission of applications of affected students, who

studied in Oxford Junior College, Guntur, through an alternate mechanism and permit them to take NEET UG 2026 examination.

2. This writ petition has been filed by students pursuing intermediate education at Oxford Junior College, Guntur, formerly Lakshya Junior college Guntur, which is stated to be affiliated to and recognized by Board of Intermediate Education, Andhra Pradesh. This institution was provided with college code No.14104 and is also providing coaching and academic support for competitive examinations like NEET, JEE and EAPCET.

3. Counsel for petitioners submits that students and their parents have an agricultural background and do not possess sufficient knowledge regarding procedure for submission of applications for competitive examinations. They thus depended and relied upon assistance from one Mr. Murthy, who was serving the College as a computer/DTP operator. Said Mr. Murthy used to assist students in applying for competitive examinations.

4. During previous academic years, several students had sought his help for applying for NEET UG 2025 and JEE 2025. He had submitted their applications successfully and students had taken the examinations without any hindrance. Therefore, believing that he would also submit forms of present students, petitioners and their parents trusted him and deposited necessary amounts for submission of applications for competitive examinations like including NEET UG 2026, JEE Mains and EAPCET.

However on 08.04.2026, it came to light that certain students, who had taken assistance of Mr. Murthy for applying for JEE examinations, were issued fake and invalid hall tickets. Such students were denied entry into examination centers.

5. Enquiries were then made and it came to light that Mr. Murthy had fraudulently collected amount from students and had failed to submit their applications for examinations. Affected students, who were unable to take JEE examination, lodged a complaint at Pattabhipuram Police Station, Guntur and Crime No.198 of 2026 dated 09.04.2026, was registered against Mr. Murthy and College management.

6. It is only when this fraud came to light on 08.04.2026, upon wide publicity being given that petitioners realized that their applications had also not been submitted. Last date for submission of applications for NEET UG 2026 was 11.03.2026. Board of Intermediate Education, Andhra Pradesh, being apprised of this incident also addressed a communication to National Testing Agency for extension of time and providing an opportunity to affected students to submit their applications. Thereafter on 18.04.2026, parents of all affected students including petitioners submitted detailed representations via email to respondents but no action, it is stated, has been taken thereon leading to filing of present writ petition.

7. Learned counsel for petitioners vehemently argues that petitioners, who are innocent students having a rural background, should be permitted participation in NEET UG 2026 and should not be deprived of the opportunity because they are not at fault in any manner and neither would acceptance of their applications at this stage cause any prejudice to any other candidate. It is thus prayed that this writ petition be allowed.

8. Learned Central Government Counsel submits that online applications were invited by NTA from aspiring candidates for NEET UG 2026 through portal from 08.02.2026 to 08.03.2026 through public notice, dated 08.02.2026. Detailed instructions were also issued to aspiring candidates through information bulletin for NEET UG 2026, published on said NEET UG 2026 examination portal on 08.02.2026 itself. These instructions were in regard to carefully filling up online application form which should be complete and correct in all respects, to be submitted by last date as specified after downloading and perusing information bulletin.

9. Last date for submission of online application as well as deposit of fee was extended up to 11.03.2026 09:00 p.m. for completion of online application, and up to 11.50 p.m. for successful deposit of requisite examination fee. Extension of last date was also published on portal via public notice dated 08.03.2026.

10. Reference has been made by learned counsel for respondents to various detailed instructions provided in public notice as well as declaration regarding imperativeness of following the said instructions strictly. It is further pointed out that it is mentioned in public notice itself that non-compliance of instructions would lead to rejection of the form.

11 Learned Central Government Counsel further submits that it is categorically mentioned in the important instructions that candidates can apply for NEET UG 2026 through 'online mode' only, through website <https://neet.nta.nic.in/>; Submission of online application form may be done by accessing NTA website only and that application form in any other mode will not be accepted. Clause (v) of instructions specifically states that candidates must strictly follow instructions given in the information bulletin and on the NTA website. Candidates not complying with the instructions shall be summarily disqualified.

12. It is further submitted by learned Central Government Counsel that it was incumbent upon petitioners to apply for NEET UG 2026 examination by the last date stipulated or even the extended date. No care was taken by them to even obtain confirmation page of respective online application forms from the so called college clerk. It is submitted that petitioners took no action for confirming whether their applications had been submitted within the stipulated period of 33 days. Furthermore, even when the issue purportedly came forth

on 08/09.04.2026, no action was taken till 18.04.2026. Furthermore, NEET UG 2026 exam is to be held on 03.05.2026. Admit cards have already been issued online to all candidates under intimation to them vide public notice dated 26.04.2026.

13. Learned counsel for respondents argues that exam material, especially question papers, attendance sheets have already reached the destination exam cities. It would not be possible for NTA to accommodate petitioners for NEET UG 2026 exams, as various steps involved in preparation/conduct of this examination especially from the angle of security, which starts from printing of question paper, manner in which it has to be numbered and tallied with OMR answer sheet for every candidate (both in terms of QP booklet code and QP booklet series), transportation to exam cities, safe custody at exam cities and secure delivery to exam center(s) concerned on 03.05.2026.

14. Exam has to be held at one go and in a single shift across the country and also at certain centers out of the country. Therefore, any indulgence, if shown to petitioners at this stage, may destabilize entire process of preparation and conduct of this exam involving 22,79,743 candidates across 5,446 exam centers in 566 cities (including 14 cities abroad).

15. It is further submitted on behalf of respondents that 159 other applicants had approached NTA to reopen fee payment window and 1,598 applicants had sought reopening of application window along with payment window, but

no indulgence whatsoever was afforded to such candidates as well to maintain the sanctity of exam in question. It is thus prayed that this writ petition be dismissed being devoid of any merit.

16. We heard learned counsel for parties and have carefully perused the file.

17. It is a matter of record and not denied that in terms of notice dated 08.02.2026, last date for submission of application for taking NEET UG 2026 was 08.03.2026, thereafter extended to 11.03.2026 as per public notice dated 08.03.2026.

18. Application forms of petitioners were admittedly not submitted along with the amount in question within stipulated time period. It is the case of petitioners that they had submitted fee as well as relevant information to one Mr. Murthy of respondent College for uploading the same online, but he fraudulently did not do needful causing prejudice to present petitioners. Criminal case is stated to have been registered at the instance of other students and that petitioners came to know that their applications were not submitted only on 08/09.04.2026.

19. Be that as it may, it is an admitted fact and a matter of record that applications of petitioners could not be submitted online within the stipulated period. Apart from specific timelines being provided, there are specific instructions in public notice dated 08.02.2026. It is categorically stated therein

that candidates must strictly follow instructions in the information bulletin and on NTA website and non-compliance thereof would lead to summary disqualification of the candidature. It is further provided that candidates must ensure that email address and mobile number provided in online application form is their own or of their parents/guardians only, as all information/communication will be sent by NTA through email on registered email address, or SMS on registered mobile number only.

20. It is a settled position that timelines stipulated in advertisement/public notice/information bulletin must be strictly adhered to and no modification therein is called for by this Court in exercise of jurisdiction under Article 226 of the Constitution of India. Gainful reference in this respect can be made to a judgment of full Bench of Punjab and Haryana High Court in ***Rahul Prabhakar Vs. Punjab Technical University, Jalandhar and others, I.L.R Punjab and Haryana 1997 (2) 292.***

21. It is equally well settled that though there might be some hardship caused to the student/candidate, interference cannot be made on humanitarian grounds. In this respect, gainful reference can be made to judgment of Hon'ble the Supreme Court in ***State of Tamil Nadu and Others Vs. G. Hemalatha and another***¹. It is further to be noted that any intervention by this Court at this stage may impinge upon the sanctity of the

¹ Civil Appeal No.6669 of 2019 arising out of SLP (C) No.14093 of 2019

examination. Learned counsel for petitioners is unable to point out any ground which calls for interference by us at this stage. No other argument was raised.

22. Keeping in view facts and circumstances as above, this writ petition is dismissed being devoid of any merit. No costs.

Pending miscellaneous applications, if any, shall stand closed.

LISA GILL, CJ

NINALA JAYASURYA, J

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**HON'BLE MRS.JUSTICE LISA GILL, CHIEF JUSTICE
&
HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE NINALA JAYASURYA**

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DATE : 29.04.2026

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