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W.A.No.1707 of 2025

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

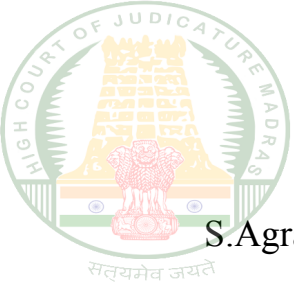
**RESERVED ON : 17-06-2025
PRONOUNCED ON : 03.07.2025**

CORAM

**THE HONOURABLE MRS JUSTICE J. NISHA BANU
AND
THE HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE M.JOTHIRAMAN**

**WA No. 1707 of 2025
and CMP No.12937 of 2025**

1. S.Sai Priya
D/O. Selvam G
Residing At L2 127, Happnest, 5th Cross Street, Avadi,
Paruthipattu Kamaraj Nagar, Tiruvallur- 600 071
2. M.P.Arthika
D/O. Muralidharan J,
Residing At No 80, Cheran Street, New Rajaji Puram,
Tiruvallur-602 001.
3. Y.Akthar Farveez
S/O. Yousuf Ali. A
Residing At No 284. Velmurugan Nagar, Morai Avadi,
Tiruvallur-600 055.
4. C.Shruthi Chandru
D/O. Chandru Aiyapillai
Residing At No 34,Ramalingapuram, 2nd Street,
Kamaraj Nagar, Avadi, Tiruvallur-600 071
5. Bharath Kumar M
S/O. Mani
Residing At No. 4/56, First Street, TNR Kandikai,



W.A.No.1707 of 2025

S.Agraharam, Tiruvallu-631 205

6. E.Hariharan

S/O. Elango S

Residing At No 2/993, Vk Avenue Extension, Shakthi Nagar, North Malayambakkam, Kanchipuram-600 123.

7. R.Karthika

D/O. Ravikumar M

Residing At No. 66 Main Road, Ivelli Agaram, VS Nagar, Thalakanchery Road, Tiruvallur 602 021.

8. S.Akshaya

Residing At No 1, Rathan Chand Nagar, Ashok Nagar, Arakkonam, Ranipet-631 001.

9. M.Dharaneeshwari

D/O. Muni Krishnan,

Residing At Type-1-470/2, HVF Estate, Avadi Camp, Tiruvallur- 600 054.

10. R.Meenakshi

D/O. Rukumangathan R,

Residing at 4 A, SI Police Quarters, SV Koil Street, Periyakuppam, Tiruvallur-602 001.

11. Minor V.Darsini

Represented by her father and natural guardian

Venkatesan, Residing At 396, Soorvari Kandigai Village, Sirupuzhalppettai Post, Gummidippondi Taluk, Tiruvallur-601 201.

12. Minor Naveen Kumar Rajasekar

Represented by his mother and natural guardian

M.Narmatha, Residing At No 17,EVR Periyar Street, NGO Nagar, Ponneri, Tiruvallur-601 204.

Appellant(s)



W.A.No.1707 of 2025

Vs

WEB COPY

1. Union Of India
represented by its Secretary, Ministry of Education,
Government Of India, New Delhi-110 001
- 2.National Medical Commission
represented by Secretary, Pocket 4, Sector No.8, Dhuvaraga
Pace 1, New Delhi 110 077
- 3.National Testing Agency
through its Director General, Having Office At C-20 1A/8,
Sector 62, IITK Outreach Centre, Noida -201 309
- 4.The Director
Directorate General Of Health Services,
Ministry Of Health and Family Services, Anna Salai,
Teynampet, Chennai 600 018
- 5.G.Aarthi
D/O.Gunasekaran, Residing At No.22, New Star City,
Vilangadupakkam,Tiruvallur.

Respondent(s)

Writ Appeal filed under Clause 15 of the Letter Patent Appeal to set aside the order dated 06-06-2025 passed in WP.No.18359 of 2025 on the file of this Court.

For Appellant(s) :Mr.T. Saikrishnan

For Respondent(s) :Mr.AR.L.Sundaresan
Additional Solicitor General assisted by
Mr.M.Sathyan
Central Government Standing Counsel for R1



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W.A.No.1707 of 2025

Mrs.Sunitha Kumar
Standing Counsel for NTA for R3
Ms.Subharanjani Anand for R2
No appearance for RR 4 & 5

ORDER

(Made by M.Jothiraman J.)

An intra-court appeal has been preferred as against the order dated 06-06-2025 passed in WP.No.18359 of 2025 on the file of this Court.

2. Medical aspirants had filed five writ petitions in W.P.Nos.18359, 19359, 19337, 19369 & 19004 of 2025 for a common relief. The common ground urged in the writ petitions is that there was a power outage during NEET (UG) 2025 examination in the following centres, viz. (1) PM Shri Kendriya Vidyalaya CRPF, Avadi, (ii) Government Girls Higher Secondary School, Ponniamman Koil Stree, Kundrathur, (iii) Padma Seshadri Bala Bhavan Senior Secondary School, K.K.Nagar, (iv) PM Shri Kendriya Vidyalaya, Minambakkam. The appellants/writ petitioners filed WP.No.18359 of 2025 seeking a direction to the National Test Agency (NTA), third respondent, to consider their representation and conduct re-examination for them and for the similarly affected candidates as well.



W.A.No.1707 of 2025

3. The Writ Court *vide* common order dated 06.06.2025 dismissed

all the five writ petitions, aggrieved by which, the petitioners in W.P.No.18359 of 2025 have preferred the present appeal.

4. The learned counsel appearing for the appellants would submit that the grievance of the appellants was not merely the occurrence of power outage, but, a complete breakdown of exam conditions from 3.00 p.m. to 4.15 p.m. including lack of lighting due to power failure caused due to heavy rainfall and darkened skies and gross inequality in exam conditions compared to other exam centres. The report of the NTA is not fair, complete and conclusive, despite material and factual inaccuracies, incomplete findings and lack of contemporaneous objective evidence, particularly, CCTV footage, which was neither disclosed to the appellants nor examined by the Court, since the objections of the appellants to the speaking order have been filed at the time of hearing writ petitions. Further, the learned counsel would submit that in spite of the power outage, the examination centre did not provide any compensatory time and have not arranged for any power backup. Hence, it is just and necessary to conduct re-examination for the appellants and prayed to allow the writ appeal.



W.A.No.1707 of 2025

5. *Per contra*, the learned Additional Solicitor General appearing

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for the first respondent and third respondent/NTA would submit that though there was a brief power outage there was no impact upon the performance of the candidates as the exam was conducted during the daytime. The candidates were not moved from their assigned seats and the disruption was minor and the same is seen from the screenshots of the CCTV footage, which is placed before this Court pertains to the multiple rooms including the room, where the appellants were seated and the images clearly shows that the examination rooms had large windows with glass panes that allowed ample ambient daylight to enter. Even during the short period between power outage and generator restoration, the rooms remained sufficiently illuminated due to natural light and the candidates continued writing without interruption and thus, the lighting conditions remained conducive to the fair conduct of the examination. It is his further submission that out of thirteen appellants one of the appellants had attempted to attend 179 questions out of 180 questions. Similarly, five appellants have attempted to attend more than 140 questions out of 180 questions. Hence, he prayed to dismiss the writ appeal.



W.A.No.1707 of 2025

6. We have considered the submissions made on either side and perused the records.

7. This Court *vide* order dated 10.06.2025 directed the third respondent/NTA to produce the CCTV footage of the examination hall in question. In compliance to the aforesaid order, the NTA has filed a report dated 15.06.2025 along with the screenshots of the CCTV footage of various class rooms at the centre, dated 04.05.2025 concerning the NEET (UG) 2025 examination conducted at PM Shri Kendriya Vidyalaya CRPF, Avadi, Thiruvallur District, Exam Centre Code 4111103.

8. On 16.05.2025, the Writ Court has passed an interim order in W.P.No.18359 of 2025, the relevant portion of which, reads as under:

“7. Considering the over all situation, till a decision is taken by National Testing Agency on the representation made by the petitioners, the respondents shall not publish the results. It is hoped that the 3rd respondent will take a call at the earliest.”



W.A.No.1707 of 2025

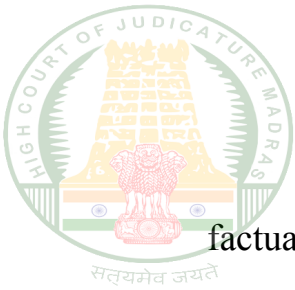
9. On 06.06.2025, the Writ Court has passed a common order in

W.P.Nos.18359, 19359, 19337, 19369 & 19004 of 2025, the relevant portion of which, reads as under:

“10. When the National Testing Agency, after thorough investigation had arrived at the above conclusion, though such conclusion was disputed by the petitioners, this Court has found no grounds to deviate from the above conclusion, as there is no malice pleaded against the National Testing Agency.

11. Therefore, when the Authority themselves, after field verification and with the scientific method, had arrived at a reasonable conclusion that there are no grounds for re-examination, the same needs to be accepted, unless the said report is tainted with mala fides. In the instant cases, I do not find any mala fides on the part of the respondents. Furthermore, all over India, there were about 22 lakhs students have participated in the NEET (UG) 2025 examination. In such view of the matter, if any re-examination is permitted on trivial grounds, the same would seriously affect the level playing field of more than two million candidates. Hence, this Court does not find any merit in these writ petitions.”

10. In pursuance of the above order dated 16.05.2025, the respondents have conducted a field verification of the examination centre with the Centre Superintendent, City Coordinator, NTA-appointed Observers and Invigilators on duty in the examination halls and also obtained written



W.A.No.1707 of 2025

factual reports from all key functionaries deployed at the said centre. It is

appropriate to extract the relevant portion of the speaking order issued by the

NTA in F.NO.F-201(1)/23/2025-Legal dated 01.06.2025, which reads as follows:

“3. Examination of Petitioner's Contentions by NTA

In compliance with the Hon'ble Court's directions, the National Testing Agency undertook a comprehensive enquiry into the matter. This consisted of the following components:

a). Field Verification of Examination Centre.

NTA checked the contention of the candidate and obtained written factual reports from all key functionaries deployed at the said centre, including:

- i. Centre Superintendent*
- ii. City Coordinator*
- iii. NTA-appointed Observers*
- iv. Invigilators on duty in the examination halls*

The facts emerging from these reports are summarized as follows:

i. A brief power outage occurred in the region due to a sudden natural storm and rainfall, across parts of Tiruvallur district on the said date.

ii. Despite this, the examination rooms were reported to be sufficiently illuminated with ambient daylight, for the exam purpose the exam was held during peak afternoon hours in early May between 02:00 pm to 05:00 pm. Also, the school had arranged for power backup facility which were utilised and brought into use by the exam functionaries.



WEB COPY



W.A.No.1707 of 2025

iii.No disruption of examination was reported. Candidates remained seated and continued writing without disturbance or pause.

iv.No contemporaneous complaints or representations were raised or projected by any of the candidates including the petitioners regarding lighting or adverse exam conditions during the conduct of the exam.

v.Neither the Centre Superintendent nor any of the observers or invigilators recommended compensatory time or reported any procedural irregularity nor reported any representations from any candidates on power outage.

vi. The examination was conducted strictly as per NTA protocols.

b) Statistical Analysis by Independent Expert Committee

To assess whether the reported outage had any discernible effect on candidate performance, an independent Committee of Statisticians was constituted by NTA. The committee carried out an analysis based on anonymized data related to:

The average number of questions attempted by candidates at the said centre and comparisons with other centres in Tiruvallur district are Statistically comparable across the centres in the district where the examination was conducted smoothly.

The committee's findings indicate:

i.The average number of questions attempted by candidates at Centre Code 4111103 was statistically consistent with other centres in district.



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W.A.No.1707 of 2025

ii. *There was no abnormal variation or decline in the number of attempted questions that would suggest disruption or disadvantage.*

iii. *Candidate performance at the centre was found to be within the normal expected range, based on comparative data vis a vis other centres of the district.*

c) *Time-bound Nature of the NEET (UG) Examination Process*

The NEET (UG) examination is a national-level, high-stakes entrance examination administered to over 22 lakh candidates across India in a single session. The entire examination and result processing workflow is time-bound, involving:

i. *Collection, consolidation, and secure transport of OMR sheets from all centres across the country.*

ii. *Scanning and digitization of OMR responses under strict security protocols.*

iii. *Evaluation of answer sheets through automated and verified processes.*

iv. *Publication of provisional answer keys, followed by a structured challenge mechanism to address objections raised by candidates on the OMR, Responses and the Provisional Answer Keys.*

v. *Finalization of answer keys based on expert scrutiny of challenges received.*

vi. *Processing and declaration of results in coordination with the academic calendar.*

This entire chain is meticulously planned to adhere to the admission cycle deadlines set by the National Medical



WEB COPY



W.A.No.1707 of 2025

Commission (NMC), which is responsible for counselling and seat allocation. Any undue delay in the examination or result declaration would have a cascading effect on the nationwide admission process, potentially disrupting the academic year for lakhs of students and affecting seat allocations across medical institutions.

4.Findings and Conclusions'

After carefully considering the contention(s) of the petitioners' in the writ petition as well as in their representations, the factual reports received from on-ground examination functionaries and the findings of the Independent Statistical Expert Committee, the following conclusions have been arrived at:

- i.The examination at exam Centre 4111103 PM Shri Kendriya Vidyalaya was conducted under adequate light conditions, and though there was a brief power outage, natural light was sufficient and examination activities continued uninterrupted. Besides there was power backup arranged by the Centre.*
- ii.Candidates were not asked to stop writing at any point of time, nor were they hindered in completing their paper.*
- iii.There was no material disruption to the examination process at the said centre. Candidates including petitioners did not report/represent any grievance during conduct of the exam or immediately thereafter to any exam functionaries at centre.*
- iv.The examination was conducted in a smooth and uninterrupted manner, notwithstanding the temporary power fluctuation.*
- v. The performance data of the petitioners and other*



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W.A.No.1707 of 2025

candidates at the centre vis a vis other centres in the district indicates no adverse impact on their attempts to the questions on OMR answer sheet due to the alleged incident.

Accordingly, NTA finds no justification in the petitioners' claim as it is not supported by either contemporaneous reports or performance data."

11. According to the speaking order dated 01.06.2025, though there was a brief power outage, natural light was sufficient and examination activities continued uninterrupted besides there was a power backup arranged by the centre.

12. According to the subsequent report dated 15.06.2025 along with the screenshots of CCTV footage pertains to multiple rooms including the room where the appellants were seated and the recording begins at 2.00 p.m. and continued uninterrupted till approximately 3.09 p.m. and thereafter, due to a regional power outage attributed to localized storms, the recording ceased as the CCTV system - managed by a private vendor - was not connected to the generator (DG) supply grid. The report also states that the examination centre was equipped with a dedicated diesel generator (DG) supply, which was activated immediately after the power outage and



W.A.No.1707 of 2025

restoration of power to all floors of the centre, particularly, lighting in examination rooms, was prioritized and completed in a few minutes.

13. It is to be noted that the integrity of the exam is particularly ensured through human supervision including the presence of the Centre Superintendent, Invigilators, NTA appointed Observers and City Coordinator. All these officials have examined and confirmed that the examination was conducted smoothly. A factual enquiry was undertaken by the NTA and the enquiry was conducted with regard to the field verification through the reports of the examination functionaries and an independent statistical analysis of candidate performance data. Statistical analysis was conducted by an independent expert committee and the said committee carried out an analysis based on anonymized data relating to the average number of questions attempted by the candidates at the said centre and comparisons with other centres in Thiruvallur District are statistically comparable across the centres in the district, where the examination was conducted smoothly. This analysis found no statistically significant difference in the number of questions attempted, confirming that the alleged power outage did not materially impact candidate performance. Further



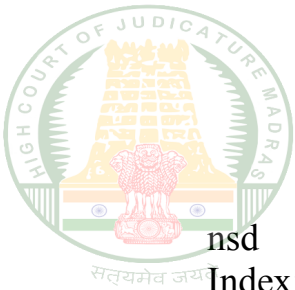
W.A.No.1707 of 2025

more, NEET (UG) 2025 is a time sensitive and large scale national examination.

14. This Court is of the opinion that it is crucial to uphold the integrity of the educational assessments in conducting examinations and this Court cannot sit in an appellate jurisdiction against the considered decision of the speaking order passed by the NTA, after field verification of examination centre and statistical analysis by an independent expert committee with no affiliation to the NTA, unless such decision is demonstrated to be manifestly arbitrary, *mala fide* or illegal. In such circumstances, if any re-examination is permitted, the same would severely affect more than two million candidates. Therefore, we do not find any reason to interfere with the order impugned and the writ appeal lacks merit and the same is liable to be dismissed.

In the result, this writ appeal stands dismissed. No costs. Connected C.M.P. is closed.

(J.N.B., J.)(M.J.R., J.)
03-07-2025



W.A.No.1707 of 2025

nsd

Index: Yes/No

Speaking/Non-speaking order

Internet: Yes

Neutral Citation: Yes/No

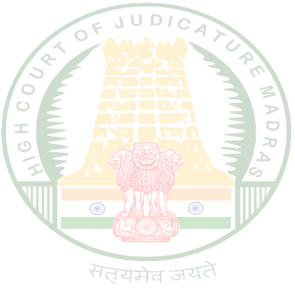
To

1.The Secretary, Ministry of Education,
Government Of India, New Delhi-110 001

2.The Secretary, National Medical Commission
Pocket 4, Sector No.8, Dhuvaraga Pace 1, New Delhi 110 077

3.The Director General, National Testing Agency
Having Office At C-20 1A/8, Sector 62, IITK Outreach Centre,
Noida -201 309

4.The Director
Directorate General Of Health Services,
Ministry Of Health and Family Services, Anna Salai,
Teynampet, Chennai 600 018



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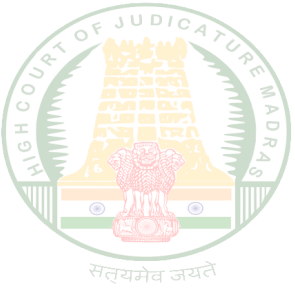


W.A.No.1707 of 2025

**J.NISHA BANU J.
AND
M.JOTHIRAMAN J.**

nsd

WA No. 1707 of 2025



WEB COPY



W.A.No.1707 of 2025

03.07.2025