

S U P R E M E C O U R T O F I N D I A
RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Writ Petition(s)(Civil) No(s). 456/2025

ADITI & ORS.

Petitioner(s)

VERSUS

NATIONAL BOARD OF EXAMINATION IN MEDICAL
SCIENCES & ORS.

Respondent(s)

(IA No. 136078/2025 - APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION
IA No. 114537/2025 - EX-PARTE STAY)

WITH W.P.(C) No. 463/2025
(IA No. 126584/2025 - APPROPRIATE ORDERS/DIRECTIONS)

W.P.(C) No. 1122/2021
(IA No. 137884/2021 - EARLY HEARING APPLICATION
IA No. 131149/2021 - EX-PARTE AD-INTERIM RELIEF
IA No. 131148/2021 - EXEMPTION FROM FILING AFFIDAVIT
IA No. 767/2022 - EXEMPTION FROM FILING AFFIDAVIT
IA No. 137886/2021 - EXEMPTION FROM FILING AFFIDAVIT
IA No. 145660/2021 - INTERVENTION APPLICATION
IA No. 133655/2021 - INTERVENTION/IMPLEADMENT
IA No. 10211/2022 - PERMISSION TO FILE ADDITIONAL
DOCUMENTS/FACTS/ANNEXURES
IA No. 746/2022 - PERMISSION TO FILE ADDITIONAL
DOCUMENTS/FACTS/ANNEXURES)

W.P.(C) No. 1355/2021
(IA No. 9068/2022 - EXEMPTION FROM FILING AFFIDAVIT
IA No. 163890/2021 - EXEMPTION FROM FILING AFFIDAVIT
IA No. 163891/2021 - STAY APPLICATION)

W.P.(C) No. 583/2024
(IA No. 211225/2024 - ADDITION / DELETION / MODIFICATION PARTIES
IA No. 256230/2024 - APPROPRIATE ORDERS/DIRECTIONS
IA No. 206520/2024 - EX-PARTE AD-INTERIM RELIEF
IA No. 211138/2024 - INTERVENTION/IMPLEADMENT
IA No. 217839/2024 - INTERVENTION/IMPLEADMENT)

W.P.(C) No. 451/2023

W.P.(C) No. 385/2024

FOR ADMISSION

W.P.(C) No. 171568/2024 - PERMISSION TO FILE ADDITIONAL
DOCUMENTS/FACTS/ANNEXURES)

W.P.(C) No. 784/2024 (FOR ADMISSION)

Date : 30-05-2025 These matters were called on for hearing today.

CORAM :

HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE VIKRAM NATH
HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE SANJAY KUMAR
HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE N.V. ANJARIA
(PARTIAL COURT WORKING DAYS BENCH)

For Petitioner(s) :

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For Respondent(s) :

Ms. Maninder Acharya, Sr. Adv.
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Ms. Chitrangda, Adv.
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Ms. Neelam Sharma, AOR
Mr. Alekshendra Sharma, Adv.
Mr. Aditya Kumar, Adv.

Mr. Sarthak Ghonkrokta, AOR

UPON hearing the counsel, the Court made the following
O R D E R

Heard the learned counsel appearing for the parties.

2. Basically, two issues have been raised in the present petitions.

3. One is that the holding of the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (Post Graduate) (NEET-PG) 2025 examination in two shifts would give rise to arbitrariness as it does not extend a level playing field to all the candidates, inasmuch as two question papers can never be of the same standard and level of difficulty. Last year, the NEET-PG examination was held in two shifts and the process of normalization was adopted in that scenario but the authorities concerned had ample time to make arrangements to hold the NEET-PG examination in one shift at least this year.

4. The other issue raised in the present petitions is with regard to disclosure of the answer sheets, question papers, etc., of the said examination.

5. At present, we are examining only the question of holding the examination in two shifts or in a single shift, as prayed for by the petitioners.

6. This Court, on 5th May, 2025, issued notice in the present petitions and required the respondents to file their response. Response has been filed and, primarily, two grounds have been taken in support of holding the examination in two shifts. First, that the number of candidates who would appear in the said examination are too large, making it difficult for the examining body to identify sufficient number of secure centres to hold the

examination in one shift, and the second is that, if the examination is held in one shift, unscrupulous elements may get involved and there could be malpractices.

7. Further, another contention vehemently urged on behalf of the respondents is that even if the examining body makes an effort to identify more secure centres, it would take time which may result in delaying the holding of the examination as per schedule and the consequent process of counselling and admissions, etc., would also be delayed, which would not be in keeping with the timeline fixed by this Court for completion of the admission process.

8. This contention also deserves to be rejected as there is still enough time for the examining body to identify sufficient number of secure centres so as to hold the examination in one shift.

9. We find that the total number of candidates who have applied this year for the NEET-PG examination is 2,42,678. The examination will be held all over the country and not in one State. We are not ready to accept that in the entire country, considering the technological advancements we have achieved, the examining body cannot find sufficient number of centres to hold the examination in one shift. In this regard, we may also note that the examining body has collected hefty examination fees of ₹3,500/- from each general category candidate and ₹2,500 from each SC/ST/PWD category candidate and is, therefore,

possessed of more than enough funds to commission sufficient number of centres so as to smoothly hold the examination in one shift.

10. Holding the examination in two shifts would invariably enable arbitrariness and would not entail at-par evaluation of the comparative merit of the candidates who take the examinations. No two question papers can ever be said to be at an identical level of difficulty or ease. There is bound to be a variation. Normalization may be applied and adopted in exceptional circumstances but not in a routine manner year after year, especially when the number of candidates is not unduly large, as is the case presently.

11. The examination for this year is scheduled to be held on 15th June, 2025. Two weeks' time is still there for the examining body to identify more centres so as to hold the examination in one shift.

12. We, accordingly, direct the respondents to make necessary arrangements for holding the NEET-PG, 2025, examination in one shift, duly ensuring that complete transparency is maintained and secure centres are identified and commissioned.

13. The second issue raised in these petitions can be considered after the examination is held.

14. List on 14th July, 2025.

15. It would be open to the respondents to apply for extension of time in case they find that they are unable to identify the required number of secure centres.

(ANITA MALHOTRA)
AR-CUM-PS

(SUDHIR KUMAR SHARMA)
COURT MASTER