



2026:DHC:8630



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IN THE HIGH COURT OF DELHI AT NEW DELHI*Judgment reserved on: 21.08.2026**Judgment pronounced on:01.10.2026*

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W.P.(C) 7955/2026**MS. ASHI AGARWAL****.....Petitioner**

Through: Ms. Gunjan Sinha Jain Adv, Mr.
Omar Hoda Adv, Mr. Uday Bhatia Adv, Mr.
Aviral Jain Adv, Mr. Abhinav Chakrabarty

versus**UNION OF INDIA & ORS****.....Respondents**

Through: Ms Puja S Kalra CGSC for R1
Mr. Sanjay Khanna (SC), Ms. Pragya Bhushan,
Mr. Naman Dwivedi, Mr. Saurabh Pandey, Ms.
Jaya Choudhary, Ms. Meemansa Dixit, Adv. for
NTA/R2
Mr. Arjun Mitra Senior Advocate and Ms.
Jayanti Jha Advocate for R3

CORAM:**HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE JASMEET SINGH****J U D G M E N T**

1. This is a writ petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India, seeking the following prayers:

*“A. Issue a writ of Certiorari or any other appropriate writ
to set aside the Rejection Order (dt. 18.05.2026) passed by*



Respondent No. 3 qua the petitioner's candidature and admission to IIT;

B. Issue a writ of Mandamus or any other appropriate writ, direction, command or order to the Respondents qua the petitioner's admission and candidature to IIT (B. Tech) in a manner that the petitioner's academic year, which would have started in the year 2025 (if not for Respondents' errors identified by the petitioner in her JEE (Main) 2025 Session 1 Paper and the petitioner being restrained to attend JEE (Main) 2025 Session 2 Paper), is preserved.

C. Pass such order or directions as this Hon'ble Court may deem fit and proper in the facts and circumstances of the case."

FACTUAL BACKGROUND AS PER THE PETITIONER

2. The petitioner is a 19-year-old student who completed her Class XII examination from Army Public School, Bareilly, in the academic session 2023 - 2024. After taking a drop of 1 year, she appeared in JEE (Main) 2025, Session-I, conducted by the National Testing Agency ("NTA") on 28.01.2025.
3. Respondent No. 1 is the Union of India, through the Ministry of Education. Respondent No. 2 is the NTA, which conducts the JEE (Main) examination. Respondent No. 3 is the Organising Chairman of JEE (Advanced) 2026 at IIT Roorkee, which organised the said examination, conducted under the supervision of the Joint Admission Board.



4. Upon release of her response sheet and the provisional answer key, the petitioner alleged discrepancies in the evaluation of five questions, namely Questions 36, 37 and 38 of Physics and Questions 51 and 54 of Chemistry. According to her, she had answered these questions correctly but had been deprived of 20 marks and subjected to 5 marks of negative marking. She accordingly addressed representations to the NTA seeking rectification. The NTA, however, did not accept her contention and maintained that there was no error in the computer-based examination system.
5. The petitioner thereafter appeared for JEE (Main) 2025, Session-II, on 02.04.2025. She reached the examination centre at about 8:25 a.m. but, while awaiting entry into the examination hall, suddenly became unwell and vomited. Though she recovered shortly thereafter, the officials at the centre did not permit her to enter the examination hall. The petitioner further alleges that she and her mother were physically assaulted by the security personnel when they requested that she be permitted to take the examination.
6. The result of JEE (Main) 2025 was declared on 18.04.2025, wherein the petitioner secured a percentile of 85.9241340. She maintained that but for the alleged incorrect evaluation in Session-I and her exclusion from Session-II, she would have obtained a percentile sufficient to qualify for JEE (Advanced) 2025.
7. The petitioner accordingly instituted W.P.(C) No. 5538/2025 before this Court on 23.04.2025, seeking revision of her JEE (Main) score and permission to participate in JEE (Advanced) 2025. During the proceedings, the NTA placed on record an audit log concerning the petitioner's examination.



8. The petitioner, upon examining the same, alleged discrepancies including incorrect dates, time-stamps recorded after the conclusion of the examination, inconsistent questions/option identification numbers and a mismatch between the audit log and the response sheet in respect of some questions.
9. The petitioner also sought production of the rough sheets allegedly retained by the NTA after her examination, contending that the same would demonstrate the answers worked out by her in respect of the disputed questions.
10. Notice was issued on the said application on 02.04.2026; however, according to the petitioner, the rough sheets were not produced.
11. In the said proceedings, the petitioner filed a rejoinder relying upon the NTA's methodology for computation of percentile and contending that, upon restoration of the disputed marks, her subject-wise percentile would cross the applicable cut-off. The NTA did not place on record any working sheet controverting the petitioner's computation.
12. On 12.05.2026, this Court disposed of W.P.(C) No. 5538/2025 by directing the Organising Chairman, JEE (Advanced) 2026, IIT Roorkee, to consider the writ petition along with the documents and applications as a representation and to decide the same in accordance with the extant rules and regulations, expeditiously and in any event within one week.
13. In the meantime, the JEE (Advanced) 2026 examination was conducted on 17.05.2026. The petitioner was not permitted to appear therein on the ground that she did not satisfy the eligibility criteria under the applicable rules. On 18.05.2026, the Organising Chairman passed the impugned Rejection Order, rejecting the petitioner's



representation and observing that the issues raised by her fell outside his purview and concerned the NTA.

14. Aggrieved by the said Rejection Order and contending that her inability to participate in JEE (Advanced) was the consequence of the aforesaid circumstances, the petitioner has instituted the present writ petition under Article 226 of the Constitution of India, seeking, inter alia, setting aside of the Rejection Order and appropriate directions concerning her candidature and admission to the IITs.

SUBMISSIONS ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONER

15. Ms. Gunjan Sinha Jain, learned counsel for the petitioner, submits that the impugned Rejection Order is contrary to the specific directions issued by this Court vide order dated 15.05.2025 in W.P.(C) No. 5538/2025, whereby the writ petition, along with the documents and applications filed therein, were directed to be treated as a representation and were to be decided by the Organising Chairman, JEE (Advanced) 2026, IIT Roorkee, in accordance with the extant rules and regulations. It is submitted that the impugned order does not constitute a meaningful consideration of the representation, as the principal issues raised by the petitioner on merits of the case have not been examined.
16. Learned counsel submits that the petitioner had specifically challenged the correctness of her evaluation in JEE (Main) 2025 and had identified discrepancies in the records furnished by NTA, including the audit log and response sheet. It is pointed out that the audit log records the examination date as 26.01.2025, whereas the examination was conducted on 28.01.2025; records activity beyond



the stipulated examination time; and contains question and option ID prefixes which, according to the petitioner, do not correspond with the relevant paper. More significantly, for Question ID 656445748, the audit log records the selected option as Option 8, whereas the response sheet records Option 6. It is submitted that such discrepancies warranted verification of the underlying records rather than a summary rejection of the petitioner's claim.

17. Learned counsel further submits that the petitioner had challenged the evaluation of five specific questions, namely Questions Nos. 36, 37 and 38 of Physics and Questions Nos. 51 and 54 of Chemistry. The petitioner had also sought production of the rough sheets retained by NTA after the examination, which, according to her, would corroborate the answers worked out during the examination. Despite CM No. 20818/2026 having been filed in earlier WP 5538 of 2025 for production of the said material, NTA had not produced the same. It is submitted that Respondent No. 3, instead of examining these aspects or seeking clarification from NTA, rejected the grievance merely on the ground that the conduct of JEE (Main) was outside its purview.
18. Learned counsel submits that the petitioner's grievance is not confined to the alleged non-award of 25 marks. The challenge concerns the reliability of the evaluation itself, particularly in view of the inconsistencies in the records furnished by NTA. The petitioner further submits that the percentile of 92.3911227 attributed to her, in case, her 5 disputed questions are marked as correct has not been supported by disclosure of the underlying computation, including the relevant inputs used for determining the percentile. In these circumstances, the petitioner contends that her eligibility could not



have been conclusively determined without first resolving the disputed evaluation.

19. Learned counsel also submits that the petitioner was deprived of appearing in the Session-II examination of JEE (Main) 2025 despite having reached the examination centre at approximately 8:25 a.m., before the prescribed gate-closing time of 8:30 a.m. According to the petitioner, she had already crossed the entry gates of the campus but, owing to a brief episode of indisposition, was delayed in reaching the examination hall and was thereafter prevented from entering. It is submitted that the applicable 2025 Information Bulletin did not contain the express exclusionary stipulation subsequently incorporated in the 2026 Bulletin. Consequently, the petitioner contends that she was deprived of the opportunity to improve her position through the second session, the benefit of the better of the two scores being available for determining eligibility for JEE (Advanced).
20. Learned counsel submits that the reliance placed in the impugned order upon the interim observations contained in the order dated 15.05.2025 is misplaced. The said observations were made at an interlocutory stage and did not finally determine the disputed questions concerning the correctness of the petitioner's evaluation. The Organising Chairman was, therefore, required to consider the representation on its own merits and could not treat the interim observations as a final adjudication of the petitioner's entitlement.
21. Learned counsel submits that, in these circumstances, Criterion A4 of Clause 11 of the JEE (Advanced) 2026 Information Brochure could not have been applied mechanically. The petitioner's case is that she was otherwise eligible to participate in JEE (Advanced) 2025, but was



deprived of that opportunity owing to the disputed evaluation and denial of participation in Session-II of JEE (Main) 2025. It is thus submitted that the ordinary eligibility rule cannot be applied without first examining whether the petitioner's loss of eligibility itself resulted from an error attributable to the Respondents.

22. Learned counsel places reliance upon the judgment of the Supreme Court in *S. Krishna Sradha v. State of Andhra Pradesh*, (2020) 17 SCC 465, to submit that where a meritorious candidate has approached the Court expeditiously and the loss of an academic opportunity is attributable to the authorities, the Court may, in exceptional circumstances, mould the relief to prevent the candidate from suffering for no fault of her own. On this basis, the petitioner seeks appropriate consequential relief, including consideration for a supernumerary seat, subject to the satisfaction of the Court.
23. It is accordingly submitted that the impugned Rejection Order, having failed to examine the material contentions and relevant records placed by the petitioner, is vitiated by non-application of mind and cannot be sustained. The petitioner therefore seeks setting aside of the impugned order and appropriate directions for reconsideration of her claim, or such consequential relief as this Court may deem appropriate in the facts and circumstances of the case.

SUBMISSIONS ON BEHALF OF THE RESPONDENT NO. 2

24. Mr. Khanna, learned standing counsel of the respondent No. 2 submits that the grievances raised by the petitioner concerning the JEE (Main) 2025 examination, including alleged errors in evaluation, discrepancies in the Audit Logs, software glitches, denial of entry to



the Session-II examination, alleged misconduct at the examination centre and incorrect computation of percentile, had already been raised and adjudicated in W.P.(C.) No. 5538/2025.

25. The said writ petition was disposed of by order dated 12.05.2026, whereby the Organising Chairman, JEE (Advanced) 2026, IIT Roorkee, was directed to consider the petitioner's grievances as a representation in accordance with the applicable rules. The said order has not been challenged and has consequently attained finality.
26. It is further submitted that the Rejection Order dated 18.05.2026 was passed by Respondent No. 3 pursuant to the aforesaid directions, whereas the respondent No. 2 neither passed the said order nor had any role in its decision-making process. The petitioner cannot, under the guise of challenging the consequential Rejection Order, seek to reopen the very grievances against the NTA which already stood concluded in the earlier proceedings.
27. The learned counsel further submits that no interim relief was granted to the petitioner in W.P.(C.) No. 5538/2025 and that the JEE (Main) 2026 examination has since been conducted and its results declared. Consequently, the petitioner's claim for admission for the academic year 2026 - 27 on the basis of JEE (Main) 2025 cannot now be acted upon, rendering the present petition infructuous. It is also submitted that this Court, vide order dated 29.05.2026 in CM No. 38253/2026, had declined the interim arrangement sought by the petitioner.
28. In these circumstances, it is submitted that no surviving cause of action remains and that the present petition, insofar as it seeks to reagitate issues already concluded in the earlier proceedings, has been rendered infructuous and should be dismissed.



SUBMISSIONS ON BEHALF OF THE RESPONDENT NO. 3

29. Mr. Mitra, learned senior counsel appearing for Respondent No. 3, submits that the present petition is not maintainable for want of territorial jurisdiction.
30. It is submitted that the relief sought by the petitioner is directed exclusively against Respondent No. 3; the impugned order dated 18.05.2026 was passed at Roorkee, Uttarakhand, and the petitioner is a resident of Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh. The grievances forming the subject matter of the earlier proceedings also arose in relation to the conduct of JEE (Main) 2025 at Bareilly. It is, therefore, submitted that no part of the cause of action has arisen within the territorial jurisdiction of this Court.
31. On merits, learned counsel submits that the impugned order dated 18.05.2026 is a reasoned and speaking order passed in due compliance with the directions contained in the order dated 12.05.2026 in W.P.(C.) No. 5538/2025. Pursuant thereto, respondent No. 3 considered the writ petition, the documents and applications filed by the petitioner and her written submissions and thereafter considered her representation in accordance with the extant Rules governing JEE (Advanced) 2026.
32. It is submitted that the jurisdiction and functions of respondent No. 3 are confined to the conduct of JEE (Advanced) and the admission process following the declaration of the JEE (Advanced) result, in accordance with the applicable Information Brochure and the Joint Seat Allocation Authority (JoSAA) Business Rules. Respondent No. 3 neither conducts JEE (Main), nor evaluates its answer scripts or response sheets, nor exercises any supervisory or appellate



jurisdiction over the National Testing Agency. Consequently, the petitioner's grievances concerning the evaluation of JEE (Main), answer keys, audit logs, response sheets, alleged technical glitches, denial of entry to the examination centre and conduct of personnel at the examination centre fall outside the jurisdiction of Respondent No. 3.

- 33.** It is further submitted that JEE (Advanced) 2025 and JEE (Advanced) 2026 have already been conducted and the admission process for the academic year 2026 - 27 stood concluded through JoSAA on 16.07.2026. The petitioner did not appear in JEE (Advanced) 2026 as she was ineligible under Criterion A4 of Clause 11 of the applicable Information Brochure.
- 34.** Learned counsel submits that the impugned order also considered the petitioner's eligibility under the alternative route relating to performance in International Science Olympiads. The petitioner did not satisfy the prescribed requirements under that route either. It is submitted that her first appearance in the Class XII qualifying examination was in 2024 and, in the absence of the requisite performance in the specified International Science Olympiads, she did not fulfil the applicable eligibility requirements.
- 35.** As regards the various grounds raised by the petitioner concerning the JEE (Main) examination, it is submitted that Respondent No. 3 neither has the custody of the relevant records nor is the authority to adjudicate upon the correctness of the evaluation, audit logs, rough sheets, percentile computation or the circumstances surrounding the petitioner's alleged denial of entry to the examination centre. Such matters fall within the domain of Respondent No. 2. The mere



pendency of proceedings or applications concerning such records does not enlarge the jurisdiction of Respondent No. 3.

36. It is further submitted that the petitioner is, in substance, seeking an appellate review of matters relating to JEE (Main) and a relaxation of the eligibility conditions applicable to JEE (Advanced). Respondent No. 3 is neither an appellate authority over Respondent No. 2 nor competent to dilute or dispense with the mandatory eligibility criteria. The Court, while exercising jurisdiction under Article 226 of the Constitution, may not be invited to substitute a mode of admission which is not contemplated by the governing framework.
37. In view of the aforesaid submissions, learned counsel submits that the impugned order dated 18.05.2026 suffers from no infirmity warranting interference. The petitioner does not satisfy the eligibility conditions for JEE (Advanced) 2026 or admission through the alternative route relied upon by her, and Respondent No. 3 had no authority to grant the reliefs sought dehors the governing admission framework. The present petition is, therefore, liable to be dismissed.

REJOINDER SUBMISSIONS ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONER

38. The learned counsel for the petitioner submits that the Impugned Rejection Order dated 18.05.2026 is unsustainable, having failed to address the substantive discrepancies pointed out by the petitioner in the Audit Log, including incorrect dates and timestamps, non-existent Option/Question IDs and the mismatch between the Audit Log and Response Sheet. It is submitted that Respondent No. 2 has not rebutted these defects either in the earlier proceedings or in the present Counter Affidavit.



39. It is further submitted that the earlier W.P.(C) No. 5538 of 2025 was disposed of by Order dated 12.05.2026 by directing Respondent No. 3 to consider the writ petition as a representation, without any adjudication on merits. Consequently, the plea of res judicata is misconceived. The petitioner submits that the present petition challenges the fresh Rejection Order dated 18.05.2026, which mechanically relies upon the disputed percentile and Criterion A4 without examining the underlying evaluation defects. The petitioner, therefore, seeks appropriate directions for reconsideration of the grievance in accordance with law.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

40. I have heard the learned counsels for the parties and perused the material on record.
41. The principal grievance of the petitioner arises from the alleged discrepancies in the evaluation of her JEE (Main) 2025 examination, including the audit log, response sheet, computation of percentile and the circumstances in which she was allegedly denied entry to the Session-II examination. The consequential relief sought by the petitioner is founded upon the premise that, upon correction of the aforesaid alleged errors, she would have attained the requisite eligibility for JEE (Advanced) and, consequently, for admission to an IIT.
42. It is imperative to note that the petitioner is seeking a supernumerary seat in IIT Delhi for the academic year 2026 on the basis of an examination conducted in 2025, in which she admittedly did not secure the requisite cut-off.



43. The Joint Entrance Examination (“**JEE**”) comprises two stages, namely, JEE Main and JEE Advanced. JEE Main is the qualifying examination for admission to IITs, NITs, IIITs and other Centrally Funded Technical Institutions (“**CFTIs**”) participating in the Central Seat Allocation Board process, subject to the prescribed Class XII eligibility criteria, including the requirement of 75% marks or placement within the top 20 percentile of the respective Board.
44. JEE Advanced constitutes the second stage of the JEE system and is the gateway for undergraduate admission to the 23 Indian Institutes of Technology (“**IITs**”). The examination is conducted annually by one of the seven zonal IITs on a rotational basis. For the year 2026, JEE Advanced is being conducted by IIT Roorkee.
45. As regards the question of maintainability of the present petition, I am unable to accept the contention of the respondents that this Court lacks territorial jurisdiction merely on the ground that the representation was decided by IIT Roorkee and the incident in question took place at Bareilly. Much water has since flowed under the bridge. The present petition arises in the backdrop of the earlier order passed by this Court, whereby the matter was referred to the concerned authority (respondent No. 3), being the authority entrusted with the conduct of the relevant examination, for consideration and adjudication of the petitioner’s grievance. The subsequent decision of the said authority, which forms part of the cause of action in the present proceedings, cannot be viewed in isolation from the aforesaid proceedings before this Court.
46. With this background in mind, I shall examine the rival contentions.

Petition barred by Res Judicata



47. The first objection raised by the respondents is that the present proceedings are barred by the principle of res judicata, the petitioner having earlier instituted W.P.(C) No. 5538/2025 raising substantially the same grievances.
48. The said objection, in my view, cannot be accepted. The earlier writ petition was disposed of vide order dated 12.05.2026 by directing Respondent No. 3 to consider the writ petition, along with the documents and applications filed therein, as a representation and to decide the same in accordance with the extant rules and regulations. The said order did not adjudicate upon the correctness of the petitioner's allegations concerning the evaluation of her JEE (Main) examination, the discrepancies alleged in the audit log and response sheet, or the computation of her percentile.
49. The order of 12.05.2026 reads as under:



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* **IN THE HIGH COURT OF DELHI AT NEW DELHI**
+ W.P.(C) 5538/2025 & CM APPL. 25181/2025, CM APPL.
20818/2026., CM APPL. 31004/2026, CM APPL. 31005/2026
ASHI AGARWALPetitioner

Through: Ms. Lubna Naaz Adv
versus

UNION OF INDIA & ORS.Respondents

Through:
Mr Sanjya Khanna (SC), Ms. Pragya Bhushan,
Ms. Vilakshana Dayma, Ms. Anshu Kumari, Mr.
Saurabh Pandey, Advs. for NTA
Mr. Arjun Mitra and Ms. Jayanti Jha, Advs. for R3

CORAM:
HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE JASMEET SINGH

ORDER
12.05.2026

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W.P.(C) 5538/2025

1. This is a writ petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India seeking the following prayers :-

- “(i) Issue appropriate writ/direction/order to the Respondent directing them to publish revised result of the Petitioner (Roll no. UP 04200250) in the JEE (Main) Examination 2025, Session 1, after awarding marks to the Petitioner as claimed in her letter dated 05.02.2025, addressed to Respondent No.2,*
- (ii) Permit the Petitioner to take the JEE (Advance) examination scheduled to be conducted on 18.05.2025;*
- (iii) Issue appropriate writ/order/direction quashing the letter dated 25.02.2025 issued by the Respondents, denying the claim of the Petitioner for rectification of the result,*
- (iv) Issue appropriate writ/direction/order to the Respondent*



directing them to take strict action against the concerned officials who physically assaulted the petitioner and her mother and denied the Petitioner the chance to take her Session 2 examination. ...”

2. Ms. Naaz, learned counsel for the petitioner, after consulting the petitioner who is present in Court along with her mother Anshooda Agarwal and her aunt Ms. Anjali Garg states that the petitioner would be satisfied if the present writ petition is treated as a representation by the Organising Chairman for JEE Advance 2026, IIT Roorkee.
3. In view of the same, it is directed that Organising Chairman of JEE Advance 2026, IIT Roorkee shall consider the writ petition along with the documents and the applications as a representation and decide the same in accordance with their extant rules and regulations expeditiously and in any case not later than 1 week from today.
4. Mr. Mitra, learned counsel for respondent No. 3, who joins through Video Conference Mode states that the needful shall be done.
5. The decision shall be communicated to the petitioner and/or her counsel through email.
6. The writ petition is disposed of in aforesaid terms.

50. The principle of res judicata is attracted where a matter in issue has been heard and finally decided between the parties. In the present case, there was no adjudication on merits of the aforesaid issues in the earlier proceedings. The order dated 12.05.2026 merely required respondent No. 3 to consider the petitioner's grievances as a representation in accordance with the applicable rules. The subsequent order dated 18.05.2026, which is impugned in the present



proceedings, was passed pursuant to the aforesaid direction and could not, therefore, have been the subject matter of adjudication in the earlier proceedings.

51. In the facts of the present case, the substantive grievances concerning the correctness of the petitioner's JEE (Main) evaluation was not finally adjudicated in the earlier proceedings. The present petition, which challenges the subsequent decision dated 18.05.2026, cannot consequently be held to be barred by res judicata.
52. This, however, does not conclude the matter. The rejection of the plea of res judicata only establishes that the present petition is not barred on that ground. It remains to be examined whether the impugned order suffers from any infirmity warranting interference in exercise of the extraordinary jurisdiction of this Court under Article 226 of the Constitution.

Scope Of Interference In Writ Jurisdiction

53. The scope of interference under Article 226 is well settled. The writ jurisdiction of this Court is not appellate in nature and the Court does not ordinarily undertake a re-appreciation of evidence or adjudicate disputed questions of fact, particularly where such determination involves technical expertise.
54. The same has been explained by the Court in ***Deepak Suresh Kumar v. AIIMS, 2024 SCC OnLine Del 8946*** wherein it was held as under:

“Delineating the contours of Constitutional Courts in academic matters

34. The Constitutional Courts, though tasked with the constitutional mandate to safeguard fundamental rights, including the right to education and equality, are equally saddled with a duty to weigh the fundamental rights against



the expertise of academic institutions so as to reach a nuanced approach in striking a balance between judicial oversight and academic autonomy. As a rule of prudence, the courts, while exercising writ jurisdiction for upholding the constitutional principles and fundamental rights, have endeavoured to carefully navigate the underlying separation of powers to avoid subrogation in the areas reserved for domain experts or policymakers. In essence, unless the educational policy suffers from arbitrariness or exhibits a violation of rights or statutory provisions, the judicial intervention has been generally limited to ensuring procedural fairness and adherence to law in academic matters. Put otherwise, a greater amount of deference has been extended towards pure policy decisions and it is not for the court to substitute its own policy in the place of the policy adopted by the Department, except in the circumstances broadly indicated above.

35. Reference can be made to the decision of the Supreme Court in AICTE v. Surinder Kumar Dhawan⁵, wherein, it was held that Courts are neither equipped nor have the academic or technical background to substitute themselves in place of statutory professional technical bodies and make decisions in academic matters involving standards and quality of technical education. The relevant extract of the said decision reads as under:

“16. The courts are neither equipped nor have the academic or technical background to substitute themselves in place of statutory professional technical bodies and take decisions in academic matters involving standards and quality of technical education. If the courts start entertaining petitions from individual institutions or students to permit courses of their choice, either for their convenience or to alleviate hardship or to provide better opportunities, or because they think that one course is equal to another, without realising the repercussions on the field of technical education in general, it will lead to chaos in education and deterioration in standards of education.”



36. Furthermore, the Supreme Court in *NIMS University v. Union of India*⁶ observed that technical courses like super speciality courses are not like ordinary postgraduate courses, wherein, the reduction of the eligibility percentile condition can be claimed as a matter of right. The court in the said decision held as under : (SCC OnLine SC para 9)

“9. The question as to whether the percentile should be reduced is a matter of academic policy. The reasons which have weighed with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in declining to reduce the percentile cannot be regarded as extraneous or arbitrary. Super specialty courses cannot be equated with post graduate courses or for that matter with the percentile fixed for under graduate admission. In the circumstances, it is not possible for this Court to entertain the request of the petitioner by directing a reduction in the percentile. The court cannot be unmindful of the fact that super specialty courses are at the apex of the academic spectrum. If a considered decision is taken not to lower standards by reducing the percentile fixed for eligibility, such a decision cannot be faulted. The reasons furnished are not extraneous or arbitrary.”

- 55.** The principle of judicial restraint in academic matters is also informed by the settled position that mere sympathy or individual hardship cannot furnish a basis for directing an academic authority to depart from the governing rules or standards. The Supreme Court in ***CBSE v. Sheena Peethambaran, (2003) 7 SCC 719***, held as under:

“7. In the background of the law as laid down by this Court, we find that in the case in hand the fact situation was even worse as compared to the decision cited above. The student, namely, Respondent 1 had failed to clear her Class IX examination which was a necessary requirement as provided under the bye-laws of the Board so as to be entitled to appear in Class X examination conducted by the Board. Despite notice, no one has put in appearance on



behalf of Respondents 1 and 2 to indicate any fact or circumstance so as to take any different view. Condoning the lapses or overlooking the legal requirements in consideration of mere sympathy factor does not solve the problem, rather breeds more violations in the hope of being condoned. It disturbs the discipline of the system and ultimately, adversely affects the academic standards.”

56. Similarly in ***Shashank Shekhar Pandey v. Union of India, 2025***

SCC OnLine Del 6226 the Court observed as under:

“42. Regardless, it is settled position of law that courts exercising writ jurisdiction under Article 226 ought not enter into a dense factual thicket, especially when a petitioner has failed to establish a prima facie case. Reference in this regard may be had to the decision this Court in Vibhuti Negi (supra).”

57. Thus, while this Court is not denuded of its jurisdiction under Article 226 merely because the dispute arises in the field of education or examination, the exercise of such jurisdiction must remain within the recognised parameters of judicial review.

Challenge To The Impugned Order dated 18.05.2026

58. The impugned order dated 18.05.2026 which is being assailed before the Court has been based on expert determination. The operative findings of the said order read as under:



Dated: May 18, 2026

The Hon'ble Delhi High Court has disposed of Writ Petition (Civil) 5538 / 2025 titled as Ashi Agarwal vs Union of India & Ors., and in terms of order dated 12.05.2026, has given certain directions to the Organising Chairman, JEE (Advanced) 2026.

The operative portion of the aforesaid order reads as follows:

- “
2. Ms. Naaz, learned counsel for the petitioner, after consulting the petitioner who is present in Court along with her mother Anshooda Agarwal and her aunt Ms. Anjali Garg states that the petitioner would be satisfied if the present writ petition is treated as a representation by the Organising Chairman for JEE Advance 2026, IIT Roorkee.
 3. In view of the same, it is directed that Organising Chairman of JEE Advance 2026, IIT Roorkee shall consider the writ petition along with the documents and the applications as a representation and decide the same in accordance with their extant rules and regulations expeditiously and in any case not later than 1 week from today.
 4. Mr. Mitra, learned counsel for respondent No. 3, who joins through Video Conference Mode states that the needful shall be done.
 5. The decision shall be communicated to the petitioner and/or her counsel through email.
 6. The writ petition is disposed of in aforesaid terms.”

The present decision is being passed in compliance with the above directions of the Hon'ble Court.

I have gone through the writ petition and documents, the counter affidavit filed by National Testing Agency, CM No. 20818/2026, CM No. 31004/2026 and CM No. 31005/2026 and the written submissions filed on behalf of Ms. Ashi Agarwal.

Broadly stated, Ms. Ashi Agarwal (the candidate) approached the Hon'ble Court with the primary grievance against National Testing Agency (NTA). The grievance of the candidate is two fold: (a) that she and her mother were treated harshly by the security guards at her examination centre on the day of Session 2 of JEE (Main) 2025 and was prevented from appearing in the examination and (b) when the model answer sheet and the candidate's response sheet was received by her, she was



shocked to know that even the correct answers marked by her were treated as incorrect. It is also her case that Q. No. 36, 37 and 38 in the Physics paper and Q. Nos. 51 and 54 in the Chemistry paper were incorrectly assessed by the NTA. As per the candidate, she was denied a total of more than 30 marks to which she was entitled to.

The candidate approached the Hon'ble Delhi High Court in the above, seeking the following relief:

- “(i) Issue appropriate writ/direction/order to the Respondent directing them to publish revised result of the Petitioner (Roll no. UP 04200250) in the JEE (Main) Examination 2025, Session 1, after awarding marks to the Petitioner as claimed in her letter dated 05.02.2025, addressed to Respondent No.2,*
(ii) Permit the Petitioner to take the JEE (Advance) examination scheduled to be conducted on 18.05.2025;
(iii) Issue appropriate writ/order/direction quashing the letter dated 25.02.2025 issued by the Respondents, denying the claim of the Petitioner for rectification of the result,
(iv) Issue appropriate writ/direction/order to the Respondent directing them to take strict action against the concerned officials who physically assaulted the petitioner and her mother and denied the Petitioner the chance to take her Session 2 examination.”

The case of the candidate came to be considered by the Hon'ble Court on 15.05.2025, where after hearing the parties, the following order came to be passed:

“...
8. In view of the above short affidavit, it appears that even if the benefit of 25 marks for the five disputed questions is given to the petitioner, she would not be able to make it for JEE (Advanced) in the General category for which cut-off percentile is 93.1023262. Therefore, this court is of the view that the petitioner is not entitled to any interim relief, as prayed.”

Accordingly, no direction was passed enabling the candidate to appear for JEE (Advanced) 2025 and the candidate was therefore, not eligible to be considered for being allotted any seat in an Indian Institute of Technology in 2025.

Thereafter, while the case was pending, it appears from the record that the candidate did not qualify for appearing in JEE (Advanced) 2026, being ineligible to do so. Accordingly, the candidate would not be eligible for being considered for seat allocation to any of the programs offered by the Indian Institutes of Technology through the Joint Seat Allocation process in 2026.

I have also gone through the written submissions as well as the applications filed by the candidate, in terms of the order passed by the Hon'ble High Court.

The following applications filed by the candidate seek the following relief:



- i. To be permitted to place on record additional documents, being (a) the order dated 01.05.2025 passed in WP (C) 5690/2025; (b) email dated 16.10.2025 and 07.04.2026 addressed to the Director, Indian Institute of Technology Delhi and for appropriate orders protecting her academic career
- ii. For amendment of the prayers in the writ petition (a) for being permitted to appear in JEE (Advanced) 2026 and (b) for constitution of a panel of teachers by IIT (as an alternative admission route) to give direct entry to the Petitioner herein
- iii. A third application identical in terms to (ii) above

I have gone through the records and my decision is as follows:

The Information Brochure published by the Organising Institute contain the following provisions, uniformly applicable to admission to undergraduate programs in all 23 IITs:

"Admission to various undergraduate programs (see Clause 2: ACADEMIC PROGRAMS) across IITs is carried out through the Joint Entrance Examination (Advanced) [JEE (Advanced)]. The Joint Entrance Examination (Advanced) 2026 [JEE (Advanced) 2026] and the subsequent process of admission to the IITs shall be governed by the rules contained in this document, read in conjunction with the Business Rules of the Joint Seat Allocation Authority (JoSAA) 2026 (to be published separately)."

Clause 11 of the Information Brochure contains the various eligibility criteria for appearing in the JEE (Advanced) examination, the first of which requires a candidate to be among the top 2,50,000 successful candidates (including all categories) in the B.E. / B. Tech paper of JEE (Main). This was common for 2025 and 2026.

As per the Business Rules of Joint Seat Allocation Authority, published in 2025, participating in the seat allocation process requires a candidate to have qualified in JEE (Advanced).

In the present case, neither of the pre-requisite eligibility conditions have been satisfied by the candidate. This is evident from the writ petition as well as the written submissions filed on behalf of the candidate, where it is stated that she appeared in JEE (Main) 1st Session on 28.01.2026 (should be read as 28.01.2025) from 3pm to 6pm and got 85.92 percentile which fell below the prescribed cut-off.

I am not in a position to comment on the circumstances in which the candidate claims that she was not permitted for the second session of JEE (Main) 2025. These fall outside my purview as the examination was conducted by National Testing Agency, besides the fact that the Hon'ble Court has not commented on the same.

Insofar as the contention of incorrect marking of her responses in session 1 is concerned, these contentions also fall outside my purview, as the examination was



conducted by National Testing Agency. There is also no observation by the Hon'ble Court on the correctness or otherwise of these contentions.

Further, the order dated 15.05.2025 passed by the Hon'ble Court in the writ petition clearly reproduces the stand taken by the National Testing Agency on affidavit, while declining to pass any interim orders. The stand of the National Testing Agency, as captured in the said order, is that even if the 25 marks against the 5 disputed questions as claimed by the candidate were to be given, then also she would score a percentile of 92.3911227.

The operative portion of the order dated 15.05.2025 reads as follows:

“...
8. In view of the above short affidavit, it appears that even if the benefit of 25 marks for the five disputed questions is given to the petitioner, she would not be able to make it for JEE (Advanced) in the General category for which cut-off percentile is 93.1023262. Therefore, this court is of the view that the petitioner is not entitled to any interim relief, as prayed.”

The result of the above was that the candidate was not permitted by the Hon'ble Court to appear in JEE (Advanced) 2025 and consequently, was not eligible to be considered for being allocated a seat at an IIT in 2025.

Notwithstanding the above, the candidate having first appeared for Class XII examination in 2024 would also not be eligible for appearing in JEE (Advanced) 2026, in view of Criterion A4 of Clause 11 of the Information Brochure, 2026.

Accordingly, the prayer for being permitted to appear in JEE (Advanced) 2026 cannot be acceded to.

I have also examined the contention of an alternative admission route to IITs by constituting a panel of teachers. This contention, read with the submission of students being admitted by IIT Kanpur based on exceptional performance in International Science Olympiads, indicates that the candidate is seeking admission outside the route of JEE (Advanced) followed by participating in seat allocation through JoSAA.

In this behalf, it may be noted that the candidate in this case would not be eligible for admission through performance in Olympiads, not only because she does not possess the requisite qualification, but has also appeared in Class XII for the first time in 2024. The above two factors straightaway negate her eligibility for this route as per extant rules.

It may also be noted that direct admission through any other mode is strictly governed by rules, which are applied objectively and uniformly to all applicants, on the basis of meeting the eligibility criteria and merit. Subjective oral evaluation by a panel of IIT teachers as demanded by the candidate herein, is not one of these modes. There is no justification in creating an exception in the case of this, or any



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other candidate, when all the seats at IITs are strictly allotted in terms of merit, as per the extant rules which are published in advance.

With the above, the writ petition along with the documents and the applications, as well as written submissions being considered and treated as a representation as per the directions of the Hon'ble Court, the representation of Ms. Ashi Agarwal is rejected.

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59. A perusal of the above order shows that all the contentions of the petitioner were dealt with in accordance with the extant rules and regulations. All the grievances of the petitioner were considered including the non-eligibility of the petitioner in JEE (Advanced) 2025 and 2026. The petitioner was found ineligible on the ground that, even if all the disputed questions were answered in her favour, she would not meet the requisite cut-off percentile in JEE (Main) 2025. Her eligibility to appear in JEE (Advanced) 2026 was also denied on the ground that she did not satisfy Criterion A4 of Clause 11 of the Information Brochure 2026.
60. Needless to add that evaluating issues like whether the electronic records maintained by the NTA accurately reflect the petitioner's conduct during the examination and whether any discrepancy therein materially affected the marks and percentile ultimately awarded to her or the inconsistencies in the audit log are disputed questions of fact and the petitioner cannot invoke the writ jurisdiction for it.
61. The petitioner's grievance concerning her exclusion from the Session-II examination also involves a disputed factual question. The petitioner states that she reached the examination centre before the prescribed gate-closing time but was prevented from entering the



examination hall after she became unwell. The circumstances, in which she was allegedly denied entry, including the precise stage at which she reached the examination venue and the reasons for which she was not permitted to enter, cannot be conclusively determined merely on the basis of the petitioner's assertion in the present proceedings.

62. More importantly, the relief sought by the petitioner requires several consequential assumptions to be made. It would first have to be held that the Session-I examination was incorrectly evaluated; thereafter that the petitioner would have obtained the requisite percentile upon correction; further that she would have qualified for JEE (Advanced); and finally that she would have secured admission through the prescribed admission process. Such a chain of contingencies cannot furnish the foundation for a mandatory direction for admission to an IIT.

Discrepancy in Audit Logs

63. In ***Shashank Shekhar Pandey (supra)*** it was held as under:

“40. Thus, in the absence of any manifest technical error, which has been ruled out as above, the official record maintained and secured by the NTA, must take precedence over the petitioner's claim. Reference in this regard may be had to the decision in Aishani Ojha (supra) wherein, while confronted with similar circumstances, this Court held as under:



“11. The NTA is endowed with conducting various entry-level examinations at the national level. It has established a mechanism and undertaken measures to endeavour a test environment that is free from data infringement or manipulation. For this reason, the JEE (Main) is conducted on a computer system wherein every movement of a candidates’ cursor on the screen and their responses are recorded and stored in an electronic database in the form of audit logs, that have been duly produced before the Court. The record/documents relied on by the parties, particularly the response sheet and the audit log for session 2 of JEE (Main) of petitioner have been scrutinized. As per the audit log, petitioner cleared responses to several questions after having already attempted/selected a response thereto. While petitioner has persistently contended that the same are recorded erroneously, the Court finds no reason to believe such speculations. The audit log maintained by the NTA records not only the selected response, but also the number of times a candidate has visited the question, response so selected/entered on a real-time basis. Petitioner has also failed to demonstrate that she had indeed attempted 75 questions. Her version is contradicted by the verified electronic record of NTA, which is maintained by National Informatics Centre. No technical error is manifest and thus, the Court remains unconvinced of petitioner’s claim that a technical snag in the system has resulted in low score in JEE (Main).”



64. The petitioner's contentions, including the alleged discrepancies in the audit log, the computation of the marks claimed by the petitioner, and the subsequent calculation of the so-called "hypothetical percentile" by the NTA, essentially require this Court to undertake a factual and technical examination of the examination records and the manner in which the responses were evaluated. The controversy would necessarily involve an assessment of the underlying electronic data.
65. In exercise of jurisdiction under Article 226 of the Constitution, this Court cannot undertake such a roving or fact-intensive examination, particularly in matters concerning the technical evaluation of an entrance examination, in the absence of cogent material establishing a demonstrable error or arbitrariness on the part of the examining authority. The mere fact that the petitioner disputes the computation undertaken by the NTA, including the basis on which the hypothetical percentile was arrived at, would not warrant this Court substituting its own assessment for that of the expert examining body.
66. Consequently, this Court is not inclined to enter into the aforesaid disputed questions concerning the computation of marks, or the hypothetical percentile calculated by the NTA.

Criterion A4 of Clause 11 of the Information Brochure, 2026

67. The said criterion reads as under:

"Criterion A4 – Appearance in Class XII (or equivalent) examination A candidate should have appeared for the Class XII (or equivalent) examination for the first time in*



either 2025 or 2026 with Physics, Chemistry, and Mathematics as compulsory subjects.

Candidates who had appeared in Class XII (or equivalent) examination for the first time in 2024 or earlier, are NOT eligible to appear in JEE (Advanced) 2026, irrespective of the combination or number of subjects attempted/offered.

** By appearance in Class XII (or equivalent) examination, it is meant that the Board concerned declared the result for that year irrespective of whether or not examination was conducted. It will be considered as an appearance even if the result of a particular candidate got withheld.”*

- 68.** The contention of the petitioner with respect to Criterion A4 of Clause 11 of the Information Brochure, 2026, cannot be accepted.
- 69.** The said criterion prescribes the eligibility conditions for candidates seeking to appear in JEE (Advanced) 2026 and, in clear terms, restricts eligibility to candidates who appeared for the Class XII examination for the first time in 2025 or 2026, subject to the exceptions expressly carved out therein. The petitioner admittedly appeared for the Class XII examination for the first time in 2024. Consequently, she does not satisfy the eligibility requirement prescribed under Criterion A4 for JEE (Advanced) 2026.
- 70.** The submission that the petitioner was unable to avail her eligibility for JEE (Advanced) 2025 on account of the alleged erroneous evaluation of her JEE (Main) 2025 examination does not alter the eligibility condition prescribed for the subsequent examination. The fact that the petitioner may have had an eligibility to participate in



JEE (Advanced) 2025 does not create a corresponding right to participate in JEE (Advanced) 2026 contrary to the eligibility criteria governing the latter examination.

71. It is also material that Criterion A4 is a condition of eligibility applicable to all candidates and does not confer any discretion upon the respondents to relax the requirement in individual cases. The respondents, while considering the petitioner's representation, were therefore required to apply the eligibility criteria contained in the Information Brochure, 2026, as it stood on the relevant date.
72. The plea that the respondents ought to make an exception in the petitioner's case on account of her alleged deprivation of the 2025 JEE Main Session II attempt would, in substance, require this Court to direct relaxation of a mandatory eligibility condition. Such relaxation cannot be founded merely upon the fact that the petitioner was otherwise eligible for an earlier examination. In the absence of any provision in the applicable scheme permitting such relaxation, the respondents cannot be faulted for applying Criterion A4 in its terms.
73. Accordingly, the respondents were justified in concluding that the petitioner did not satisfy Criterion A4 of Clause 11 of the Information Brochure, 2026, and the challenge to the rejection of her candidature on this ground is therefore unsustainable.
74. The interim order dated 29.05.2026 reads as under:



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* **IN THE HIGH COURT OF DELHI AT NEW DELHI**
+ **W.P.(C) 7955/2026**
MS. ASHI AGARWAL

.....Petitioner

Through: Mr. Muhammad Ali Khan, Adv; Mr.
Omar Hoda, Adv.; Mr. Uday Bhatia, Adv.; Ms.
Eesha Bakshi, Adv. Mr. Surya Kiran, Adv.; Mr.
Aviral Jain, Adv

versus

UNION OF INDIA & ORS.

.....Respondents

Through: Ms. Puja S Kalra, CGSC for R1
Mr. Sanjay Khanna (SC), Ms. Pragya Bhushan,
Ms. Vilakshana Dayma, Ms. Anshu Kumari, Mr.
Saurabh Pandey, Adv. for NTA/R2
Mr. Arjun Mitra Advocate for JEE/R3

CORAM:**HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE JASMEET SINGH****ORDER**

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29.05.2026**CM APPL. 38252/2026**

Allowed subject to all just exceptions.

The application stands disposed of.

W.P.(C) 7955/2026

1. This is a writ petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India seeking the following prayers:-

"A. Issue a writ of Certiorari or any other appropriate writ



(b) Direct Respondent No. 3 to earmark and keep available one supernumerary seat in the B.Tech programme at an Indian Institute of Technology preferred by the Petitioner (for instance, IIT Delhi), for the academic year 2025 – 2026 to be operated subject to the final outcome of the accompanying writ petition.

(c) In the alternative to prayer (b), direct Respondent No. 3 to earmark and keep available one supernumerary seat in the B.Tech programme at an Indian Institute of Technology preferred by the Petitioner (for instance, IIT Delhi), for the academic year 2026 – 2027 to be operated subject to the final outcome of the accompanying writ petition....”

6. The case of the petitioner is that the petitioner appeared for JEE (Main) Examination on 28.01.2025 and secured about 85.9241340 percentile.
7. Upon publication of the answer sheet, the petitioner felt that the petitioner has wrongly been evaluated on 5 questions, 3 question in Physics and 2 questions in Chemistry, aggregating to a total of 25 marks.
8. The petitioner thereafter filed writ petition being W.P. (C) 5538/2025 seeking permission to appear in JEE (Advanced) and quashing the letter dated 25.02.2025, wherein the application of the petitioner for rectification of her result was dismissed.
9. In the order dated 15.05.2025, this Court in the earlier writ petition filed by the petitioner, recorded in paragraph No. 8 that even if the benefit of 25 marks, for 5 disputed questions, is given to the



petitioner, she would still not be able to qualify for JEE (Advanced) 2025 in the general category as the cut off for the same was 93.1023262 percentile.

10. This Court while disposing of W.P. (C) 5538/2025 on 12.05.2026 directed the Organising Chairman of JEE (Advanced) 2026 to consider the writ petition along with the documents and the application as a representation and decide the same in accordance with the extant rules and regulations. The same has been so done and *vide* impugned order dated 18.05.2026 the representation of the petitioner was rejected.
11. Despite the above stated facts, Mr. Khan, learned counsel for the petitioner, seeks direction to the respondent No.3 to earmark and keep one supernumerary seat in B.Tech. (Programme) at IIT for the benefit of the petitioner.
12. For the said reasons, issue notice.
13. Ms. Kalra, learned CGSC accepts notice on behalf of the respondent No. 1, Mr. Khanna, learned standing counsel, accepts notice on behalf of the respondent No. 2 and Mr. Mitra, learned counsel accept notice on behalf of the respondent Nos. 3.
14. I am of the view that the relief prayed by the petitioner cannot be granted by this Court. The petitioner had participated in the JEE (Mains) for the academic year 2025 and disputed 15 questions. As noted in the order dated 15.05.2025, even if 25 marks were added, the petitioner would not have qualified for JEE (Advanced) for the year 2025. Despite the same, the petitioner is seeking a seat to be reserved in JEE (Advance) 2026 based only on the JEE (Main) examination of



the year 2025. To my mind, the same cannot be so done.

15. Hence, the application is dismissed.

75. A perusal of the above order shows that the interim relief was declined on the basis that the petitioner could not seek a seat in JEE (Advanced) 2026 solely on the strength of her participation in JEE (Main) 2025, particularly when, as recorded in the above said order, even an addition of 25 marks would not have enabled her to qualify for JEE (Advanced) 2025. The said order was challenged before the Hon'ble Supreme Court and has attained finality. The finding, therefore, cannot be reagitated in the present proceedings.
76. The admission process to the IITs is founded upon a structured and merit-based system, in which lakhs of candidates participate each year. The eligibility criteria, qualifying thresholds, number of attempts and available seats are prescribed in advance and are uniformly applicable to all candidates. Such a framework necessarily requires adherence to the prescribed criteria so as to maintain certainty and parity in the admission process.
77. Creation of a supernumerary seat, particularly in a highly competitive and merit-based admission process, cannot be treated as an ordinary consequential relief flowing from the filing of a writ petition.

Moulding of Relief in the Present Case

78. There can be no quarrel with the proposition that the Court possesses the power, in an appropriate case, to mould relief to prevent a meritorious candidate from suffering for no fault of her own. However, the exercise of such power necessarily presupposes a determination that the loss of the academic opportunity was attributable to an error or illegality on the part of the authorities. In



the present case, the foundational allegations regarding the correctness of the JEE (Main) evaluation and the circumstances surrounding the petitioner's non-participation in Session-II remain disputed and cannot be conclusively established in these proceedings.

79. Consequently, the decision in **S. Krishna Sradha (supra)** as relied upon by the petitioner cannot be invoked to bypass the eligibility conditions prescribed under the governing examination framework or to require respondent No. 3 to create an alternative route to admission which is not contemplated by the applicable rules.
80. Additionally, the petitioner appeared only in JEE (Main) 2025 and was unable to secure the requisite cut-off for JEE (Advanced). The said examination cycle has since concluded, and the academic year in question has already progressed by one year. The petitioner was ineligible to participate in JEE (Advanced) 2026. In these circumstances, the petitioner now seeks admission to a seat in the 2026 academic session on the basis of the result of an examination undertaken in 2025. In my view, such a relief cannot be granted, as the result of JEE (Main) 2025 cannot form the basis for admission to the subsequent academic session in 2026.
81. The petitioner has also challenged the application of the eligibility criterion of 2 years contained in the JEE (Advanced) 2026 Information Brochure on the ground that her inability to satisfy the criterion was itself the consequence of the respondents' alleged errors. However, unless the underlying errors are first established, there can be no basis for treating the petitioner as having satisfied the prescribed eligibility condition.
82. The Court is conscious of the fact that the petitioner seeks preservation of an academic opportunity which, according to her, was



lost on account of circumstances beyond her control. However, sympathy or the possibility of an academic loss cannot substitute for satisfaction of the eligibility requirements prescribed for admission to the IITs. The Court is required to apply the governing framework uniformly, unless a legally sustainable basis for deviation therefrom is established.

83. It is also relevant that the relief sought would have the effect of reopening a concluded examination and admission cycle and would require the Court to devise a mode of admission outside the mechanism prescribed under the applicable rules. No such power has been demonstrated to vest either in respondent No. 3 or in this Court on the facts presently established before it.
84. Thus, while the present petition is not barred by res judicata, the petitioner has not been able to establish any ground warranting interference with the impugned order dated 18.05.2026.

CONCLUSION

85. In view of the aforesaid discussion, no ground is made out for interference under Article 226 of the Constitution. The consequential reliefs sought by the petitioner, including preservation of the academic year or consideration for admission to an IIT, cannot be granted.
86. The writ petition is, accordingly, dismissed, along with the pending applications, if any.

JASMEET SINGH, J

OCTOBER 01st, 2026/DE