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* **IN THE HIGH COURT OF DELHI AT NEW DELHI**

Date of decision: 13.04.2026

+ **W.P.(C) 1325/2026**

SALMAN SALEEM

.....Petitioner

Through: Mr. Kaif Hasan, Mr. Mohammad Waseem, Mr. Vaibhav Pachauri, Mr. Firdouse, Advs.

versus

UNION OF INDIA & ORS.

.....Respondents

Through: Mr. Syed Abdul Haseeb, CGSC with Mr. Muhammad Aamir Khan, Mr. Syed Abdur Rahman, Advs. for UOI
Ms. Aishwarya Srivastava, Adv. for R-5/NTA
Mr. Pritish Sabharwal, SC for JMI

CORAM:

HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE JASMEET SINGH

: **JASMEET SINGH, J (ORAL)**

CM.APPL. 24062/2026

1. This is an application filed under Section 151 of CPC, 1908 seeking early hearing of the main petition.
2. For the reasons stated in the application, the present application is allowed, and the main petition shall be taken up for hearing today.
3. The present application has been disposed of in aforesaid terms.

W.P.(C) 1325/2026

4. In view of the above, the matter has been taken up for hearing today.
5. 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, order or direction, quashing and setting aside the illegal and arbitrary action/decision of the respondent university denying admission to the petitioner to the Ph.D. Programme (Academic) 2025–26 in Anwar Jamal Kidwai–Mass Communication Research Centre (AJK-MCRC) under the Exempted Category, after having provisionally selected him and declared him successful in the final selection list dated 19.12.2025.

B. Issue a writ of Mandamus directing the respondents to treat the date of issuance of Ph.D. Admission Notification dated 16.10.2025 as the relevant date for determining the validity of UGC-NET Certificate/Scorecard, in absence of any prescribed cut-off date under the Ph.D. Ordinance or UGC Regulations., And/or

C. Issue a writ, order or direction in nature of certiorari quashing the Selected Admission List dated 19.12.2025 and further issue a writ, order or direction in the nature of mandamus directing the Respondents to issue/prepare a fresh list of admission following the reservation policy as per the Ordinance 6 (VI) and the revised Ph.D. Ordinance dated 17.10.2025 , And/or

D. Issue a writ, order or direction in nature of certiorari quashing the notice dated 20.12.2025 (ANNEXURE-A2) issue by the Controller of Examinations calling



provisionally selected candidates for verification and admission, and further issue a writ, order or direction in the nature of mandamus directing the Respondents to issue/prepare a fresh list of admission and notification for admission following the reservation policy as per the Ordinance 6 (VI) and the revised Ph.D. Ordinance dated 17.10.2025, And/or

E. Issue a writ, order or direction in nature of mandamus directing the Respondents to specify the seats in the admission to the course of Ph.D. program of AJK-MCRC (Session 2025-26) under different categories of reservation as per the Ordinance 6 (VI) , And/or

F. Issue a writ, order or direction in nature of mandamus directing the Respondents to strictly and religiously follow the reservation policy as per the Ordinance 6 (VI) in all its future admissions in all its future admissions, And/or

G. Issue a writ of Mandamus directing the respondents not to deny or withdraw admission from the petitioner on grounds arising solely out of administrative delay attributable to the respondent university, after having verified the petitioner at multiple stages and offered admission, And/or...”

6. The case of the petitioner is that the petitioner qualified UGC-NET (June-2024), which made the petitioner eligible for Assistant Professor and Admission to Ph.D. *vide* result dated 17.10.2024. The respondent No. 5 i.e., National Testing Agency (“NTA”) issued



Certificate of Eligibility (“*Certificate of Eligibility*”) to the petitioner, as per which Validity of the admission certificate to Ph.D. was one year from date of result i.e., one year from 17.10.2024.

7. Subsequently, the respondent No. 2 issued the notification for Ph.D. Admission 2025-26 *vide* notification dated 16.10.2025. The petitioner submitted Application form for Ph.D. in AJK Mass Communications & Research Centre under Exemption Category with exemption qualification of UGC-NET II & Muslim Reservation category.
8. The petitioner was issued Admit Card by respondent No.3 for Ph.D. Entrance Test (2025-26) under “Exempted Category”. Respondent Nos. 2 and 3 issued a List of Selected Candidates called for Interview *vide* notice dated 26.11.2025 and the petitioner was also in the said list at serial No. 20 under Exempted Category.
9. Subsequently, the respondent No. 4 issued Schedule for Interview *vide* notice dated 09.12.2025, which has petitioner’s name at Serial No. 21 under “Exempted Category”. The result of interview was declared on 19.12.2025 and the petitioner qualified the interview and was selected for admission.
10. However, later the petitioner was denied admission. Hence, the present petition.
11. In the present case, certain documents are relevant and the same need to be seen and reproduced.
12. First, is Certificate of Eligibility issued by respondent No. 5/NTA, which is extracted below: -



2026:DHC:3183



राष्ट्रीय परीक्षा एजेंसी
National Testing Agency

Excellence in Assessment



विश्वविद्यालय अनुदान आयोग

First Floor, NSIC-MDBP Building, Okhla Industrial Estate, New Delhi, 110020 (India)

UGC-NATIONAL ELIGIBILITY TEST JUNE 2024

Certificate of Eligibility for Assistant Professor and Admission to Ph.D.

- (I) E-CERTIFICATE NO.: 24/04/032903
(II) ROLL NO.: 2001083837
(III) NTA REFERENCE NO.: 240510644499
(IV) NAME: SALMAN SALEEM
(V) FATHER'S NAME: SALEEMUDDIN
(VI) MOTHER'S NAME: SHAGUFTA ANJUM
(VII) SUBJECT NAME & CODE: MASS COMMUNICATION AND JOURNALISM (063)
(VIII) QUALIFIED FOR: - ELIGIBILITY FOR ASSISTANT PROFESSOR AND ADMISSION TO PH.D.
(IX) DATE OF DECLARATION OF THE RESULT: - 17.10.2024
(X) DATE OF ISSUE OF THIS CERTIFICATE: 26.12.2024
(XI) VALIDITY OF THIS CERTIFICATE: -
(I) FOR ELIGIBILITY FOR ASSISTANT PROFESSOR: FOREVER
(II) FOR ADMISSION TO PH.D.: ONE YEAR FROM THE DATE OF DECLARATION OF RESULT
(XII) APPLIED ON THE BASIS OF: - MASTER'S DEGREE (COMPLETED)



IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS:

- A. Candidates who are pursuing their Master's degree or equivalent course or candidates who have appeared for their qualifying Master's degree (final year) examination and whose result is still awaited or candidates whose qualifying examinations have been delayed shall be considered eligible for the Assistant Professor only after they have completed their Master's degree or equivalent examination **within two years** from the date of declaration of NET result, failing, which they shall be treated as disqualified.
- B. The date of eligibility for Assistant Professor is the date of declaration of UGC-NET result, i.e. **17-10-2024**, or the date of completion of Master's degree or equivalent examination with required percentage of marks within two years from the date of declaration of UGC-NET result, i.e. by **16-10-2026**.
- C. For admission to Ph. D, the marks obtained in the NET will have 70% weightage and 30% weightage will be based on the performance in the interview/viva voce conducted by the University/HEI concerned. The Ph.D. admission will be based on the combined merit of NET marks and the marks obtained in the Interview/viva voce.
- D. The eligibility of the candidate is to be ensured by the institution. The category in which the candidate had appeared has been mentioned in the Score Card.
- E. This certificate is only valid with the Score Card of June 2024 UGC-NET which has been uploaded on the website of the NTA, i.e. <http://ugcnet.nta.ac.in>.
- F. This is an electronic certificate only and its authenticity can also be verified by scanning the QR Code

With best wishes,

(Rajesh Kumar, IRS)
Director (Exams), NTA



13. Second, is the Ph.D. Admission Notification dated 16.10.2025, which is reproduced as under:-

ANNEXURE P/5 **55**

JAMIA MILLIA ISLAMIA **جامیہ ملیا اسلامیہ**
(A Central University by an Act of Parliament)
NAAC Accredited Grade 'A++'
Maulana Mohammad Ali Jauhar Marg, New Delhi-110025

Office of the Controller of Examinations **دفتر کنٹرولر امتحانات**
Tel. : +91-11-26981717 Extn. : DR : 1410, AR : 1450, PA to CoE : 1401
Direct-Controller : +91-11-26329167 : ACE : 26329165; DR : 26840961; AR : 26847078

16 Oct 2025

Ph.D. ADMISSION: 2025-26
NOTIFICATION
Schedule of admission in the Ph.D. program for the session 2025-26

S.No.		Start Date	End Date
1	Notification Date	16 Oct 2025	
2	Availability of online forms to apply	20 Oct 2025	08 Nov 2025
3	Form open for editing	09 Nov 2025	10 Nov 2025
4	Issue of admit card	11 Nov 2025	
5	Admission test date	15 Nov 2025	16 Nov 2025
6	Result declaration	27 Nov 2025	29 Nov 2025
7	Research Proposal to be submitted to concern department/centre	Latest by 08 Dec 2025	
8	Display of list of candidates called for interview with schedule	09 Dec 2025	
9	Interviews/presentation to be conducted	10 Dec 2025	19 Dec 2025
10	Display of List of final selected candidates	22 Dec 2025	
9	Admission formalities to be completed	23 Dec 2025	30 Dec 2025
10	Commencement of classes for course work	13 Jan 2026	

- Admission forms and all related information's will be made available on JMI admission portal: <https://admission.jmi.ac.in>

- Application Fee to apply: Rs. 2000/- per student.

16/10/25
Controller of Examinations

CC to:

- All Deans/Directors/HoDs/Principal/Librarian
- The Chief Proctor
- Hony Deputy Controller of Examinations
- All Hony Assistant Controller of Examinations
- PA to Vice- Chancellor
- PA to Registrar
- Chief Media Coordinator



14. The Revised Ph.D. Ordinance-9 (IX) titled “Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) (Academic)” dated 17.10.2025 issued by the respondent university contains the eligibility criteria, which reads as under:-

“3. Admission Procedure

xxxxxxxx

c. The notification/advertisement shall be issued in advance. The admission schedule and other relevant information shall also be notified. Provided that the following categories of candidates shall be exempted from taking entrance test for Ph.D. programme:

- (i) Candidates who have qualified for fellowship/scholarship in UGC-NET I, II & III/UGC-CSIR NET/GATE*/CEED and similar National level tests.*
- (ii) ICCR- Sponsored candidates or any other equivalent fellowship holder.*

**(Qualified under general category)*

Provided that all the above candidates who have been granted entrance-test exemption will have to follow the rest of the admission process as per the schedule and fulfill all other requirements as per the Ordinances and the Ph.D. regulations.”

15. Lastly, the application form of the petitioner, which reads as under: -



جامعہ ملیہ اسلامیہ

Jamia Millia Islamia

A Central University
(NAAC Accredited A++ Grade)

Application for Ph.D. in AJK Mass Communication & Research Centre

(Edited Version)

Registration No. JMI2580002011 Application No. 2500001743M0001 ABC ID 000 Printed On 10-Nov-2025 21:51:31

Candidate Name Salman Saleem

Father's/Guardian's Name Saleemuddin

Mother's Name Shagufta Anjum

Date Of Birth 07-Jul-1998

Gender Male

Mobile Number 9045660512

Email Id saleemsalman71@gmail.com

Domicile State Uttar Pradesh

Nationality India

Blood Group B+

Religion Islam

Are you Jamia's Employee No

Ph.D Mode Regular



----- The following information is only for statistical purpose -----

Reservation Category Muslim Social Category General

Are you a Kashmiri Migrant? No Do you belong to Jammu and Kashmir? No

N.C.C. Cadet No N.S.S. Volunteer No

Family Income Rs. 5,00,000/- to Rs. 8,00,000/- EWS Yes

Are you PwD candidate? No

Correspondence Address		Permanent Address	
Address Line 1	House No 82	Address Line 1	House No 82
Address Line 2	Mohalla Qazi Sarai 2nd, Near Sallahwali	Address Line 2	Mohalla Qazi Sarai 2nd, Near Sallahwali
District/City	Nagina	District/City	Nagina
State	Uttar Pradesh	State	Uttar Pradesh
Country	India	Country	India
Pin Code	246762	Pin Code	246762
Mobile No	9045660512	Mobile No	9045660512



Academic Record							57
Qualifications (M.A/M.Com/M.Sc/M.Tech/etc)	Degree/Certificate Name	Board/ University	Year of Passing	Max Marks/ CGPA	Obtd. Marks/ CGPA	Mark(%) Status	
Post Graduation	Masters	Jamia Millia Islamia	2021	10	82	77.9 Passed Out	

Broad Area of Interest Information

Broad Area of Interest : Political Communication, Digital Campaigning, Artificial Intelligence in Politics, Influencer Marketing, Electoral Strategy, Floating Voter Behaviour, Algorithmic Targeting, Narrative Design, Ethical Digital Campaigning, Data Driven Political Consultancy, Sociotechnical Systems in Democracy, Digital Ethics, Public Perception

Entrance Test / Exemption Category Information

Exemption from Entrance Test : Yes

Exemption Qualification : UGC-NET II

Main Discipline Information

Main Discipline : AJK Mass Communication & Research Centre

Allied Preferences Information

Allied Preference 1 : Centre For Interdisciplinary Research In Basic Sciences

Allied Preference 2 : Centre For Culture Media & Governance

Allied Preference 3 : Department Of Sociology

Payment details			
Mode of Payment	date of Payment	Bank Ref. No.	Amount
UPI_ICICI	27-10-2025 21:10:36	251027248363652	2000/-

UNDERTAKING

It is hereby confirmed that I have carefully read the concerned Information Bulletin/PhD Ordinance No IX (https://www.jmi.ac.in/upload/menuupload/ordinances_ac.pdf) before filling up the Application Form. I hereby solemnly affirm that the information furnished in this Online Application Form is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief and no material information has been concealed or suppressed. If any information is found to be false, incorrect or misleading the Jamia Millia Islamia shall have the authority to cancel my candidature / admission without any further enquiry or notice.

I undertake that, if admitted, I shall abide by the UGC Regulations on Curbing the Menace of Ragging 2009, Ordinances governing the discipline of students of Jamia Millia Islamia and other Rules, Ordinances and Regulations of JMI or those that are framed by the Jamia Millia Islamia / UGC from time to time.

I understand that admission is subject to satisfaction of the prescribed eligibility criteria's to be verified by the concerned department(s) / Centre(s). Mere choosing of Main/Allied discipline on this application form will not be considered as satisfaction of eligibility.

I further undertake that the information provided by me in the online application form shall be irrevocable.

Signature



16. Mr. Hasan, learned counsel for the petitioner, states that in the present case, admittedly, the notification is dated 16.10.2025, on which date the petitioner was eligible under the exempted category as his UGC-NET II certificate was valid. Hence, the denial of admission by the respondent No. 2 is contrary to its own policy.
17. He further also relies upon the judgment of Hon'ble Supreme Court in the judgment of *Asha v. Pt. B.D. Sharma University of Health Sciences, (2012) 7 SCC 389* and the operative paragraphs of the said judgment read as under:-

“30. There is no doubt that 30th September is the cut-off date. The authorities cannot grant admission beyond the cut-off date which is specifically postulated. But where no fault is attributable to a candidate and she is denied admission for arbitrary reasons, should the cut-off date be permitted to operate as a bar to admission to such students particularly when it would result in complete ruining of the professional career of a meritorious candidate, is the question we have to answer.

31. Having recorded that the appellant is not at fault and she pursued her rights and remedies as expeditiously as possible, we are of the considered view that the cut-off date cannot be used as a technical instrument or tool to deny admission to meritorious students. The rule of merit stands completely defeated in the facts of the present case. The appellant was a candidate placed higher in the merit list. It cannot be disputed that candidates having merit much lower



to her have already been given admission in the MBBS course. The appellant had attained 832 marks while the students who had attained 821, 792, 752, 740 and 731 marks have already been given admission in the ESM category in the MBBS course. It is not only unfortunate but apparently unfair that the appellant be denied admission.

*32. Though there can be the rarest of rare cases or exceptional circumstances where the courts may have to mould the relief and make exception to the cut-off date of 30th September, but in those cases, the Court must first return a finding that no fault is attributable to the candidate, the candidate has pursued her rights and legal remedies expeditiously without any delay and that there is fault on the part of the authorities and apparent breach of some rules, regulations and principles in the process of selection and grant of admission. Where denial of admission violates the right to equality and equal treatment of the candidate, it would be completely unjust and unfair to deny such exceptional relief to the candidate. (Refer *Arti Sapru v. State of J&K [(1981) 2 SCC 484 : 1981 SCC (L&S) 398]* , *Chhavi Mehrotra v. DG, Health Services [(1994) 2 SCC 370]* and *Arvind Kumar Kankane v. State of U.P. [(2001) 8 SCC 355]*)”*

18. I have heard learned counsels for the parties.
19. In the present case, the exempted category is only in case a person has a valid UGC-NET Scorecard on the date of application. As per the



Certificate of Eligibility , the validity of the certificate is for a period of 1 year from the date of declaration of result, which as per pointer (IX) of Certificate of Eligibility is 17.10.2024 (reproduced above). Hence, the petitioner's Certificate of Eligibility was valid from 17.10.2024 till 16.10.2025.

20. As per the Ph.D. Admission Notification dated 16.10.2025 (reproduced above) the respondent only started online forms for application on 20.10.2025 and till 08.11.2025 and the application form was submitted by the petitioner only on 27.10.2025 at 21:10:36. Hence, on the said date i.e., 27.10.2025, when the petitioner applied for admission, the petitioner did not have a valid UGC-NET Scorecard.
21. Additionally, the judgment of *Asha (supra)* relied upon by the learned counsel for the petitioner is not applicable here as the same is differentiable on facts. In *Asha (supra)*, the controversy was around appellant's absence during counseling. The appellant was fully qualified on the date of counseling and meritorious but was denied admission by the medical college which was challenged. In the present case, I have already returned the finding that on the date of application, the petitioner was not qualified under the Exempted category as his Certificate of Eligibility expired its one year term.
22. The Court under Article 226 of the Constitution of India cannot extend the period of admission, which to my mind is sacrosanct.
23. The fact that the petitioner was not eligible on the date of the application is also confirmed by respondent No. 5/NTA.
24. For the said reasons, I am unable to entertain the present petition and



hence, the present petition is dismissed.

25. The next date of hearing i.e., 04.05.2026, stands cancelled.

JASMEET SINGH, J

APRIL 13, 2026/sp

(Corrected and released on 15.04.2026)