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

Date of Decision: 18th August, 2022

+ W.P.(C) 11860/2022 & CM APPL. 35428/2022

TANISHQ MISHRA

..... Petitioner

Through: Mr. Sri Harsha Peechara, Ms. Ayushi Gupta, Mr. Ashish Tiwari and Mr. Saurav Aggarwal, Advocates.

versus

NATIONAL TESTING AGENCY AND ANR.

..... Respondents

Through: Mr. Sanjay Khanna, Standing Counsel with Ms. Pragya Bhushan, Mr. Karandeep Singh and Mr. Tarandeep Singh, Advocates, with Ms. Sarika Soam, Legal Consultant for R-1/NTA.

Mr. Anurag Ahluwalia, Mr. Danish Faraz Khan and Mr. Vishal Chanda, Advocates for R-2/UOI.

Mr. Arjun Mitra, Advocate for JEE (Advanced) 2022.

CORAM:

HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE SANJEEV NARULA

JUDGMENT

SANJEEV NARULA, J. (Oral):

1. Petitioner, an aspirant of B.Tech. course, is ineligible to appear in the Joint Entrance Examination (Advanced) 2022 [***JEE (Advanced)***] as his score in the Joint Entrance Examination (Main) 2022 [***JEE (Main)***] is below the qualifying/cut-off percentile which is determined by Respondent No. 1 - National Testing Agency [***NTA***]. He emphatically asserts to the



contrary and has produced score cards for both sessions 1 and 2 of the JEE (Main) which, as per him, render him eligible; but these, regrettably for him, do not match with the NTA record. For the above reasons, Petitioner invokes Article 226 of the Constitution of India to seek mandamus to the Respondents to correct his score cards and to allow him to appear in JEE (Advanced).

2. The scheme of the JEE (Main), in brief, is as follows:

- 2.1. A candidate is required to register by filling an online application form, through which a “*system generated application number*” is allocated, which, along with security pin and date of birth, serves as the candidate’s login credentials. This login ID and password/pin also enable the candidates to view their individual results.
- 2.2. Candidates are allowed two opportunities to write the exam, which are described as Session 1 and Session 2. It is not mandatory to appear in both the sessions. Scores are on a percentile basis, and are not an aggregate or average of the marks obtained. If a candidate appears in both the sessions, the higher score of the two is considered as final for each subject, the total of which forms the “*Total NTA score*” of the candidate.
- 2.3. The JEE (Main) scores remain valid for one year and can be used by a candidate for writing JEE (Advanced) for attaining admission into IITs, NITs, NSIT, DTU, and many other engineering colleges.

Petitioner’s submissions:

3. The version of facts as narrated by the Petitioner, is as follows:



- 3.1. An admit card (Annexure P-2) was issued to him for session 1 of JEE (Main) and he appeared for the said exam on 29th June, 2022. The result of the same was declared on 10th July, 2022.
- 3.2. The document annexed as Annexure P-3 is the score card downloaded by him from the website of NTA, which shows his Total NTA Score as 98.7968939.
- 3.3. In order to improve his results, he also registered for and appeared in session 2 of the afore-said exam, which was held on 22nd July, 2022.
- 3.4. Results of JEE (Main) session 2 were declared on 07th August, 2022, and this time, as per Annexure P-5, which he claims is the score card for session 2 also downloaded from NTA website, his total NTA Score is 99.2356167, which is an improvement over the score obtained in session 1.
- 3.5. On declaration of final result, NTA declared the qualifying percentile for writing JEE (Advanced), which is referred to as the “*Cut-off Total NTA Score based on Paper 1 (B.E./B.Tech.)*”, for Common Rank List (CRL), as 88.4121383. According to Petitioner, he had breezed through the qualifier, considering his scores for either of the two sessions.
- 3.6. However, on 10th August, 2022, when Petitioner attempted to apply for the JEE (Advanced) through Respondent’s online application portal, the system generated a pop-up window displaying the following message - “*Not eligible for JEE (Advanced) 2022. You have scored less than the cut-off mark in JEE Main 2022*”.
- 3.7. Upon further inquiry, the Petitioner was tormented by finding out



that his scores were reduced from 98.7968939 and 99.2356167 to 20.7668939 and 14.6356167 percentiles in Session 1 and 2 respectively, which, he claims to have been manipulated.

4. During the hearing that took place on 11th August, 2022, which was taken up on a holiday due to urgency expressed by the Petitioner's counsel, NTA had sought time to retrieve their records. Thus, a limited interim relief was granted to the Petitioner by allowing him to only register for JEE (Advanced), and in the meantime parties were directed to complete the pleadings. Today, Mr. Harsh Peechara, counsel for the Petitioner, during the course of submissions, has handed over an affidavit under Section 65B of the Indian Evidence Act, 1872 [*"the Act"*] enclosing certain documents. NTA's counter affidavit has also been filed today, with a copy handed over across the board. Both these documents are taken on record.

5. Mr. Peechara places reliance on the documents annexed with the Petitioner's abovesaid affidavit, to submit that the two score cards produced and relied upon by Petitioner, are genuine, and have been downloaded from the website of the Respondent. He asserts that although NTA may not have *mala fide* intention against the Petitioner, but nonetheless, his results have been manipulated, which is *ex-facie* evident from the records presented to the Court. To demonstrate genuineness, Mr. Peechara points to the time and date of download mentioned atop the score cards produced by him at Annexures P-3 and P-5. He correlates the same from the browser history of his web-browser on the computer on which they were downloaded, as well as the 'file properties' of the downloaded PDFs, which are claimed to be the



score cards downloaded from the NTA website, to the computer of the Petitioner. Mr. Peechara further argues that, in fact, the timestamps of accessing the NTA website and downloading the scorecard matches with the website login timestamps shown by the NTA in the documents enclosed with its counter-affidavit, and this goes on to prove the veracity of Petitioner's contention. Nonetheless, Petitioner is willing to submit his computer system for forensic analysis at his own risk and cost.

6. Mr. Peechara also asserts that the Petitioner is a bright student who has done exceedingly well in both the sessions, but only on account of manipulation of score cards, which is outside of his control, he is being deprived of an opportunity to appear in JEE (Advanced) and consequently, also from relying upon his score cards for seeking admission to several premier engineering colleges. In case no relief is granted, Petitioner's career prospects would be severely prejudiced, and that would cause him severe emotional distress.

NTA's submissions:

7. Per *contra*, Mr. Sanjay Khanna, Standing Counsel for NTA (assisted by Ms. Sarika Soam, Legal Consultant for NTA and Mr. Binod Kumar Sahu, Director, NTA, who are present in court) states that Petitioner's documents have no credibility. The results of both sessions of JEE (Main) for all candidates were uploaded only once on the site and have been neither changed nor modified since then.

8. To substantiate his stand, he places reliance on the counter affidavit



and the documents enclosed therewith. He highlights the following aspects:

Details/ Particulars	Claim of the Petitioner	Record of NTA
Application Number in Session 1	220310014041	220310014041
Application Number in Session 2	220320051255	220320051255
Roll Number in Session 1	DL01031165	DL01031165
NTA Score in Session 1	99.1353130	20.7668939
Roll Number in Session 2	DL01014157	DL01014157
NTA Score in Session 2	99.2356167	14.6356167

9. Referring to the documents filed, Mr. Khanna has taken the Court through the entire process of registration on the NTA website - which entails filing of the application form, generation of the admit card, etc. NTA has also enclosed Petitioner's response sheets to each question of the two sessions of the exam, as attempted by him on the date of the exam, which are stored in and retrieved from NIC's database, in order to co-relate the scores mentioned on the score cards relied upon by them.

10. It is explained that, upon going through the response sheets, the raw scores which emerge, tally with the NTA's record that Petitioner has obtained only 20.7668939 percentile in session 1 and 14.6356167 percentile in session 2. The score-cards relied upon by the Petitioner do not match NTA records and are forged and fabricated. No relief can be granted on that basis.

11. Additionally, Mr. Khanna submits that assuming, but vehemently denying that the documents of the Petitioner are genuine, at the highest, it



can only be said that the Petitioner has raised a highly disputed question of fact, which, however, this Court cannot determine while exercising jurisdiction under Article 226 of the Constitution of India.¹

12. NTA has facilitated the provision for all candidates to download their respective score cards from 'UMANG' and 'DigiLocker' mobile apps which are e-governance platforms under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology. Further, score cards were also sent via e-mail to each candidate, including the Petitioner. Thus, there are ample ways to verify that the NTA record is the correct one.

Analysis:

13. Considering the fact that this decision would have serious consequences for the Petitioner, the Court has heard the counsel for the parties at sufficient length. On the basis of analysis of documents presented by both the parties, it manifests that the records of NTA do not match the documents filed and relied upon by the Petitioner as Annexure P-3 and P-5, purported to be high-scoring score cards of sessions 1 and 2 respectively. Since Petitioner strongly urges that his documents are authentic and are downloaded from the website of the Respondents, the Court dwelled into this disputed arena to form a *prima facie* view, as in the present proceedings, the court cannot embark upon a full-fledged trial. Before going further, for clarity, the score cards both the sessions, relied upon by Petitioner and by

¹ On this proposition, he places reliance on the decision of this Court dated 07th January, 2021 in W.P.(C) 6838/2020 titled *Gaurav Jaiswal Through his Legal Guardian v. Union of India through Ministry of Education/ National Testing Agency & Anr.*

Session 1 - Petitioner's version of score card:

² NTA's version of score cards have been obtained by scanning the QR code on the score cards, for the purpose of inserting a clearer colourised version; it, however, is identical to the score cards filed by NTA in its counter affidavit, albeit in black & white.



Session 1 - NTA's version of score card:

Ministry of Education Government of India		JOINT ENTRANCE EXAMINATION (MAIN) – 2022 Session 1 (JUNE 2022) NTA SCORE		राष्ट्रीय परीक्षा एजेंसी National Testing Agency		
Application No.	220310014041	Roll No.	DL01031165	 		
Candidate's Name	TANISHQ MISHRA					
Mother's Name	MRS. BOBBY MISHRA					
Father's Name	MR. KAPIL DEV MISHRA					
Category	General	Person with Disability(PwD)	No			
Gender	Male	Date of Birth	25-07-2004			
State of Eligibility	DELHI (NCT)	Nationality	Indian			

Paper 1 (B.E./B.Tech.) @		Paper 2A (B. Arch.) #		Paper 2B (B. Planning) \$	
Subject	NTA Score ^T	Subject	NTA Score ^T	Subject	NTA Score ^T
Physics	27.5008264	Mathematics *	-----	Mathematics *	-----
Chemistry	57.8775048	Aptitude Test *	-----	Aptitude Test *	-----
Mathematics	5.4353130	Drawing Test	-----	Planning Based Questions	-----
Total	20.7668939	Total	-----	Total	-----

NTA Score in Words	@	Twenty point Seven Six Six Eight Nine Three Nine Only
	#	-----
	\$	-----

^T NTA Scores of same subject but under different groups, like B. Arch and B Planning, may differ as number of candidates appeared in two groups may be different.

Date of declaration of result : 10.07.2022

Anil Kumar
Senior Director, NTA

NTA Scores are normalized scores across multi-session papers and are based on the relative performance of all those who appeared for the examination in one session. The marks obtained are converted into a scale ranging from 100 to 0 for each session.

1. NTA score is not the same as percentage of marks obtained.
2. The NTA Score indicates the percentage of candidates who have scored **EQUAL TO OR BELOW** (same or lower raw scores) a particular candidate in that session.
3. The NTA scores of a Candidate have been calculated as follows:

$$\frac{100 \times \text{Number of candidates appeared in the 'Session' with raw scores EQUAL TO OR LESS than the candidate}}{\text{Total number of the candidates appeared in the 'Session'}}$$
4. The NTA Score of the Total is **NOT** an aggregate or average of the NTA Score of individual subject.
5. Candidate's particulars including Category and Person with Disability (PwD) have been indicated as mentioned by the candidate in the online application form.
6. After the JEE (MAIN) - 2022 Session 2, the ranks of the candidates will be released taking into consideration the best of the two NTA Scores.
7. RL means 'Result Later'.



Session 2 - Petitioner's version of score card:

08/02, 10:38 AM

Annexure A-2



Ministry of Education
Government of India

Joint Entrance Examination (Main) - 2022

NTA Score



राष्ट्रीय परीक्षा एजेंसी
National Testing Agency

Paper-1 (B.E./B.Tech.)

Application No.	220320051255	Roll No. (Session 1)	---	Roll No. (Session 2)	00.01104157
Candidate's Name	TANISHQ MISHRA				
Mother's Name	BOHVI MISHRA				
Father's Name	KAPIL DEV MISHRA				
Category	General	Person with Disability (PwD)	No		
Gender	Male	Date of Birth	25-07-2004		
State Code of Eligibility	DELHI (NCT)	Nationality	Indian		



NTA score for Paper 1 (B.E./B.Tech.)			
Subject	Session 1	Session 2	Final (based on best of the Two in 'Total')
Physics	NA	99.0787502	99.0787502
Chemistry	NA	98.8996624	98.8996624
Mathematics	NA	99.1567425	99.1567425
Total	NA	99.238087	99.238087
NTA Score in Words	Ninety Nine point Zero Three Five Six One Six Seven Only		



Course	ALL INDIA RANK based on FINAL NTA Score									
	CRL	GEN-EWS	OBC-NCL	SC	ST	CRL-PwD	GEN-EWS-PwD	OBC-NCL-PwD	SC-PwD	ST-PwD
B.E./B.Tech.	5831	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Category wise Cut-off NTA Score for JEE (Advanced) - 2022 based on Paper 1 (B.E./B.Tech.)^{1,2,3}:

Cut-off Total NTA Score based on Paper 1 (B.E./B.Tech.)						
	Common Rank List (CRL)	GEN-EWS (GEN-EWS)	Other Backward Class (OBC-NCL)	Scheduled Caste (SC)	Scheduled Tribe (ST)	Category-PwD
Category	88.4121383	65.1114161	67.0090297	43.0820954	26.7771328	0.0031029

¹*** candidates eligible for JEE (Advanced)-2022 may register online at <https://jeepw.nic.in>

For seat allocation in IITs, NITs, IIST, IIITs, and some GFTIs candidates may register online at <https://jeepw.nic.in> or <https://jeepw.nic.in>

Date of declaration of result : 07.08.2022

Vinay Kumar
Senior Director, NTA

1. NTA Scores are normalized scores across multi session papers and are based on the relative performance of all those who appeared for the examination in one session. The marks obtained are transformed into a score ranging from 100 to 0 for each session of examination.
2. The NTA Score indicates the percentage of candidates who have scored EQUAL TO OR BELOW (same or lower raw scores) that particular candidate in that session.
3. The Percentile scores of a Candidate have been calculated as follows:

$$100 \times \frac{\text{Number of candidates appeared in the 'Session' with raw score EQUAL TO OR LESS than the candidate}}{\text{Total number of the candidates appeared in the 'Session'}}$$
4. The NTA Score of the Total is NOT an aggregate or average of the NTA Score of individual subjects.
5. NTA score is not the same as percentage of marks obtained.
6. Candidate's particulars including Category and Person with Disability (PwD) have been indicated as mentioned by the candidate in the online Application Form.

Session 2 - NTA's version of score card:

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printouts of the electronic record, which are discussed hereinafter.

15. The data of NTA, as shown to the court, is found to be reliable, and no visible manipulation is found that should warrant issuance of a mandamus, as prayed for.

16. The analysis of the documents and facts presented bring out the following critical factors:

A. NIC provides technical support to NTA for conducting the JEE exams. Significantly, when the results are declared, an e-mail is auto-generated from the server of National Informatics Centre [“NIC”], which is sent to the e-mail ID provided by the candidate, with a copy to an e-mail ID of the NTA which is specially designated for this purpose. The emails were sent immediately on the declaration of results and thus forms the basis for verification of results whenever a dispute is raised regarding the authenticity of the results. The print outs of such e-mails sent by the server of NIC, copy whereof was marked to NTA, have been annexed with the counter affidavit and have been examined by the court. Copy of the emails is as under:



For session 1:

[EXTERNAL] Joint Entrance Examination (Main) - 2022 Session 1 Score Card -
Application No: 220310014041 & Roll No: DL01031165

no-reply.jeemain.nta@nic.in <no-reply.jeemain.nta@nic.in>

Mon, 7/11/2022 9:23 PM

To: tanishqmishra2574@gmail.com <tanishqmishra2574@gmail.com>

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Candidates,

Please find below the details of the NTA Score of JEE (Main) - 2022 Session 1 in respect of Application No: 220310014041 & Roll No: DL01031165

Application No.	220310014041	Roll No.	DL01031165
Candidate's Name	TANISHQ MISHRA		
Mother's Name	MRS. GOBIND MISHRA		
Father's Name	MR. KAPIL DEV MISHRA		
Category	General	Person with Disability (PwD)	No
Gender	Male	Date of Birth	25-07-2004
State of Eligibility	Odisha (NTS)	Nationality	Indian

Paper 1 (B.E./B.Tech.) @		Paper 2A (B.Arch.) #		Paper 2B (B.Planning) §	
Subject	NTA Score	Subject	NTA Score	Subject	NTA Score
Physics	27.5000264	Mathematics *	.....	Mathematics *	.....
Chemistry	53.4779966	Aptitude Test*	.....	Aptitude Test *	.....
Mathematics	0.4353130	Drawing Test	.....	Planning Based Questions	.....
Total	20.7668499	Total	.....	Total	.....
NTA Score in Words	@	Twenty point Seven Six Six Eight Nine Three Nine Only			
	4	.....			
	5	.....			

* NTA Scores of same subject but under different groups, i.e. B. Arch and B. Planning, may differ as number of candidates appeared in two groups may be different.



500369A7A2927867F7771655747714886

For more information please visit official website: <https://jeemain.nta.nic.in>

Senior Director
National Testing Agency



For session 2:

[EXTERNAL] Joint Entrance Examination (Main) - 2022 Score Card - Application No: 220320051255 & Roll No. (Session 2): DL01014157

no-reply.jeemail.anta@nic.in <no-reply.jeemail.anta@nic.in>

Tue 8/9/2022 1:41 AM

To: tanishqmishra2574@gmail.com <tanishqmishra2574@gmail.com>

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Candidate,

Please find below the details of the NTA Score of JEE (Main) - 2022 for Application No: 220320051255 & Roll No. (Session 2): DL01014157

Application No.	220320051255	Roll No. (Session 1)	..	Roll No. (Session 2)	DL01014157
Candidate's Name	TANISHQ MISHRA				
Mother's Name	SOHBY MISHRA				
Father's Name	KANU DEV MISHRA				
Category	General		Person with Disability (PwD)		No
Gender	Male		Date of Birth		25-07-2004
State of Eligibility	DLH-1 (NCT)		Nationality		Indian

NTA score for Paper 1 (B.E./B.Tech.)			
Subject	Session 1	Session 2	Final (based on best of the Two in Total)
Physics	NA	4.0787552	4.0787552
Chemistry	NA	82.798624	82.798624
Mathematics	NA	0.7567425	0.7567425
Total	NA	14.6355167	14.6355167
NTA Score in words	Fourteen point Six Three Five Six One Six Score Only		

Course	ALL INDIA RANK based on FINAL NTA Score									
	CRL	GEN-EWS	OBC-NCL	SC	ST	CRL-PwD	GEN-EWS-PwD	OBC-NCL-PwD	SC-PwD	ST-PwD
Paper 1 (B.E./B.Tech.)	785530	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Category wise Cut-off NTA Score for JEE (Advanced) - 2022 based on Paper 1 (B.E./B.Tech.)

Cut-off Total NTA Score based on Paper 1 (B.E./B.Tech.)						
	Common Rank List (CRL)	GEN-EWS (GEN-EWS)	Other Backward Class (OBC-NCL)	Scheduled Caste (SC)	Scheduled Tribe (ST)	Category-PwD
Category	80.4121260	69.1118145	67.0080997	49.2920954	26.7771828	0.0091629

*** candidates eligible for JEE (Advanced)-2022 may register online at <https://jeedonline.in>

For seat allocation in IITs, NITs, IIITs, BITS, and some OJTs candidates may register online at <https://cbsa.nic.in>, <https://cbsa.nic.in>



509F5824E46246D0E857E7FDD80FD

- B. Both the score cards were dispatched, in this manner, to the registered e-mail of the Petitioner, and such email ID has not been denied by Mr.



Peechara, though the factum of receipt is refuted. The timestamps of dispatch of e-mails are also mentioned (11.07.2022 at 09:23 p.m. for session 1; and 09.08.2022 at 01:41 a.m. for session 2). There is no human intervention in the system generated emails.

- C. The e-mails enclose the score cards for both the sessions, are at great variance with the score cards relied upon by Petitioner and falsify the scorecards relied upon by the Petitioner.
- D. The electronic audit log records of Petitioner, as enclosed with the counter affidavit, are maintained in the database of NTA. They pertain to the conduct of the two sessions of the examination, and record the 'Q log' - which is a timestamp showing the candidate's real time selection of answer against each multiple-choice question.
- E. NTA was also called upon to show Petitioner's recorded response sheets for both the sessions, on the basis whereof, scores as mentioned in the score cards have been generated. These response sheets show the questions which were either attempted correctly, incorrectly or not attempted by Petitioner. On the basis of such responses, the raw score was generated which ultimately led to calculation of the percentile achieved by the Petitioner which is mentioned in the NTA score cards. These have also been perused by the court, and tally with the electronic audit log records furnished by the NTA.
- F. When the provisional answer keys were uploaded, response sheets were also uploaded at the same time, and made freely available for



download by the candidates to verify their answers. However, no response sheet has been annexed with the petition which could corroborate the scores mentioned in Annexures P-3 and P-5. Rather, no averment has been made in the petition denying the response sheets produced by NTA. When confronted with the above, Mr. Peechara on instructions orally denies the response sheets produced by NTA, but is unable to give an explanation as to why the Petitioner did not download the response sheets correlating with the high-scoring score cards of both the sessions. This denial is not only reactive, but is a mere afterthought.

- G. The score card of each candidate contains a QR code, which, when scanned, redirects to a webpage of NTA where the same scorecard, as available on the NTA website, can be accessed by entering a CAPTCHA code. This is the verification mechanism for authenticating the document. In the instant case, the QR codes displayed on Annexures P-3 and P-5 direct to the score cards which were produced by the NTA, with their counter affidavit, and not the ones which the Petitioner has produced. The authentication process of Petitioner's score cards has failed and that is the blatant fact, which cannot be ignored or brushed aside lightly. When queried on the above anomaly, Mr. Peechara states that this should be ignored, as the content of the website is maintained by NTA and Petitioner has no control over the same. Pertinently, this denial is suggestive of manipulation of the entire system by NTA, which the court finds to be implausible, particularly when the responses, logins and all such data



is stored electronically, with precise timestamps and IP addresses, which lends authenticity to the same.

- H. Respondents have also enclosed the “*Result view log*” for the two sessions, which captures the application number, IP address and time and date of each login made by the Petitioner on the website of the NTA, to view his results of sessions 1 and 2. The said document indicates that the Petitioner was aware of his result in Session 1, as early as 11th July, 2022.
- I. In the petition, there is no averment or explanation regarding the alleged date of manipulation. It merely harps on the fact that Annexures P-3 and P-5 were downloaded from NTA website. What was downloaded on the computer, wherefrom has it been downloaded, and whether it has been manipulated or is genuine, cannot be ascertained conclusively, merely on the basis of the Petitioner’s assertion. Perhaps a forensic analysis is necessary to arrive at a decisive answer on this aspect, but in the instant proceedings, only taking a *prima facie* view is possible.
- J. A certificate from NIC - which is the agency that maintains the data - has also been filed by the NTA. They have verified and authenticated the score cards of Session 1 and Session 2 which have been produced by NTA, as also the web login trail (audit trail) of the application IDs of Petitioner.
- K. Thus, given the absence of any other corroborating or supporting



documents produced by the Petitioner, in the opinion of the Court, the documents shown by NTA far outweigh the authenticity of the score cards at Annexure P-3 and P-5 relied upon by the Petitioner.

L. In fact, Mr. Khanna states that as per rules, the Petitioner's candidature is liable to be disqualified on account of attempting both sessions through different Application IDs and Roll Numbers. This also shows that the Petitioner wanted to take undue advantage. Nevertheless, that is a decision for NTA to make, and this Court need not take any view on this aspect.

17. From the above, it manifests that the records of the Respondent do not support the Petitioner on any aspect whatsoever. There is no basis for the Court to assume that the Respondent's record is manipulated or fabricated.

18. Further, in chambers, while finalizing the order, the court has also noticed a glaring error which casts serious doubt on the score cards produced by the Petitioner. The score card for session 2, as relied upon by the Petitioner (Annexure P-5), has a discrepancy between the figures and words of the NTA Score, which is extracted hereinbelow:

Total	NA	99.2356167	99.2356167
NTA Score in Words	Ninety Nine point Zero Three Five Six One Six Seven Only		

[highlight supplied]

19. As the scores and score-cards are auto generated by the NTA, there is no scope for occurrence of any human error such as the one noticed above. This further chips away at the Petitioner's claim of genuineness of documents produced.



20. The upshot of the above discussion is that the Petitioner does not have the response sheets to authenticate his scores, which could perhaps have supported his version. On the other hand, digital records produced by NTA, system-generated emails, QR mismatch, response sheets with audit log, login details for accessing website, as maintained and authenticated by NIC, all point the case to the contrary. While Petitioner may continue to assert that his documents are authentic, however, on the basis of facts and documents shown, this Court cannot come to this conclusion. The question of forgery and tampering of records can only be determined after the parties have been afforded an opportunity to lead evidence, and this exercise cannot be undertaken in the present proceedings. The Petitioner has failed to prove his *bona fides*. The Court remains unconvinced of the genuineness of the Petitioner's documents. Thus, there is no basis to grant relief to the Petitioner.

21. Dismissed along with pending application.

22. Before parting, one aspect which Mr. Peechara had emphasised on needs to be broached. He apprised the court of the emotional stress that the Petitioner is undergoing on account of the above-noted circumstances. Considering the weight attached to one's performance in such national level entrance tests which open doors to prestigious colleges, such a response is quite understandable. However, aspirants must be encouraged by their parents, teachers and mentors to see the larger picture - that this is not the end of the road for them, and that their performance in one entrance



examination is not the only yardstick for measuring their success. The Petitioner, who has just stepped into adulthood, has a long way to go, and life will surely offer him plenty of opportunities to excel.

23. Needless to say, since the court has expressed only a *prima facie* view on the authenticity of Petitioner's score cards, he is at liberty to avail such other remedy in respect thereof, as is available in law, if so advised.

AUGUST 18, 2022
d.negi

SANJEEV NARULA, J