



**IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT BOMBAY,
NAGPUR BENCH, AT NAGPUR.**

CIVIL APPLICATION (CAW) NO. 1171 OF 2026

IN

WRIT PETITION NO. 7388 OF 2023 (D)

(Kishor Rajeshwar Sonkusare ..vs.. The Scheduled Tribe Certificate Scrutiny Committee, Gadchiroli
and others)

Office Notes, Office Memoranda of Coram,
appearances, Court's orders of directions
and Registrar's orders

Court's or Judge's orders

Mr. R.S. Parsodkar, Counsel for the petitioner,
Mr. N.R. Patil, AGP for the respondent No.1.

**CORAM : URMILA JOSHI-PHALKE &
NIVEDITA P. MEHTA, JJ.**

DATED : 11-06-2026

Respondent No.1–Scheduled Tribe Certificate Scrutiny Committee, Gadchiroli, has preferred the present application seeking extension of six months' time for compliance with the directions issued by this Court while deciding the petitioner's caste claim by order dated 26.09.2024. By the said order, the Committee was directed to decide the petitioner's caste claim within a period of six months from the date of placement of the order before it.

2. After passing of the aforesaid order, respondent No.1–Committee filed four applications seeking extension of time. The first application, Civil Application No.770/2025, came to be allowed by order dated 08.04.2025, whereby the Committee was granted an extension of three months to decide the petitioner's caste claim. Thereafter, Civil Application No.1328/2025 was allowed by order dated 10.07.2025 and the period for deciding the caste claim was extended till 30.09.2025. Subsequently, Civil Application No.2374/2025 was allowed on 07.10.2025 and the time for deciding the caste claim was extended till 21.12.2025. Thereafter, Civil

Application No.5/2026 was allowed by order dated 28.01.2026, whereby this Court, as a last opportunity, granted a further period of three months to respondent No.1–Committee to decide the petitioner's caste claim. It was specifically observed that, in the event the caste claim was not decided within the said period, the matter would be viewed seriously and necessary consequences would follow.

3. The present application is the fifth in succession seeking extension of time. Respondent No.1–Committee has prayed for a further extension of six months for deciding the petitioner's caste claim. In support of the application, it is stated that the Committee could not conclude the proceedings within the time granted by this Court due to circumstances beyond its control and despite exercising due diligence.

4. Learned Assistant Government Pleader submits that the report of the Forensic Science Laboratory has recently been received and that, upon examination thereof, certain discrepancies have surfaced which require consideration by the Committee. It is further submitted that Review Application No.12229/2026 has been filed seeking review of the judgment and order dated 10.10.2013 passed in Writ Petition No.6171/2012 and that the outcome thereof may have a bearing on the adjudication of the petitioner's caste claim. It is, therefore, contended that unless the extension as sought is granted, serious prejudice may be caused in the decision-making process of the Committee.

5. Learned counsel appearing for the petitioner vehemently opposes the application. It is submitted that this is the fifth application filed by respondent No.1 Committee, seeking extension of time and that no sufficient, cogent or justifiable grounds have been made out for grant of any further extension. It is further submitted that the review application relied upon by the Committee pertains to a judgment delivered in the year

2013 and has no bearing whatsoever on the adjudication of the petitioner's caste claim. According to the learned counsel, the pendency of the said review application cannot constitute a valid ground for withholding the decision on the petitioner's caste claim. Learned counsel for the petitioner further submits that the report of the Forensic Science Laboratory, even if recently received, cannot be a ground for seeking repeated extensions, particularly when the Committee has already been granted several opportunities by this Court and has failed to conclude the proceedings within the time stipulated.

6. We have considered the rival submissions and have perused the earlier applications as well as the orders passed thereon. By order dated 28.01.2026, this Court had categorically observed that the extension granted therein was by way of a last opportunity and that no further extension would ordinarily be granted. It was further observed that, in the event the caste claim was not decided within the stipulated period, the matter would be viewed seriously and necessary consequences would follow.

7. We are not oblivious to the fact that respondent No.1 Committee, has once again approached this Court seeking extension of time despite the aforesaid observations. At the same time, it appears that the report of the Forensic Science Laboratory has been received recently and that certain discrepancies noticed therein require consideration by the Committee before arriving at a final decision. Having regard to the peculiar facts and circumstances of the case, and by way of abundant caution, we are inclined to grant a limited extension to enable the Committee to conclude the proceedings.

8. Accordingly, in the interest of justice, the time for deciding the petitioner's caste claim is extended by a further period of three months

from today, subject to respondent No.1Committee depositing costs of Rs.5,000/- (Rupees Five Thousand only) in the “Public Welfare Account”, Account No.129712010001014, IFSC Code: UBIN0812978, Union Bank of India, High Court Branch, Civil Lines, Nagpur, within a period of two weeks.

9. It is made clear that if the petitioner's caste claim is not decided within the aforesaid extended period, this Court shall be constrained to take an appropriate view in the matter and the consequences indicated in the order dated 28.01.2026 shall follow.

10. The Civil application is accordingly disposed of.

11. Interim order, if any, shall continue to operate till the decision of respondent No.1Committee.

(Nivedita P. Mehta, J.)

(Urmila Joshi-Phalke, J.)

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