

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT BOMBAY
CIVIL APPELLATE JURISDICTION**

WRIT PETITION NO. 5487 OF 2026

Yogesh Shenpadu Salunke & Anr.

....Petitioners

Versus

The State of Maharashtra & Anr.

....Respondents

**WITH
WRIT PETITION (ST) NO. 7571 OF 2026
WITH
WRIT PETITION NO. 16238 OF 2025
WITH
WRIT PETITION NO. 2675 OF 2026
WITH
WRIT PETITION NO. 13341 OF 2025
WITH
CONTEMPT PETITION NO. 144 OF 2026
WITH
INTERIM APPLICATION (ST) NO. 9999 OF 2026
WITH
WRIT PETITION NO. 13342 OF 2025
WITH
INTERIM APPLICATION NO. 2018 OF 2026
WITH
CONTEMPT PETITION NO. 722 OF 2025
WITH
CONTEMPT PETITION NO. 144 OF 2026
WITH
WRIT PETITION NO. 15784 OF 2025
WITH
WRIT PETITION NO. 3660 OF 2026
WITH
INTERIM APPLICATION (ST) NO. 11516 OF 2026
WITH
INTERIM APPLICATION NO. 2018 OF 2026
WITH
WRIT PETITION NO. 3653 OF 2026
WITH**

**WRIT PETITION NO. 3662 OF 2026
WITH
WRIT PETITION NO. 3650 OF 2026
WITH
WRIT PETITION NO. 3658 OF 2026
WITH
WRIT PETITION NO. 3655 OF 2026
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WRIT PETITION NO. 3646 OF 2026
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WRIT PETITION NO. 3657 OF 2026
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WRIT PETITION NO. 3659 OF 2026
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WRIT PETITION NO. 4365 OF 2026**

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WRIT PETITION NO. 4562 OF 2026
WITH
WRIT PETITION NO. 4549 OF 2026
WITH
WRIT PETITION NO. 4554 OF 2026**

WITH
WRIT PETITION NO. 4552 OF 2026
WITH
INTERIM APPLICATION (ST) NO. 11882 OF 2026
WITH
WRIT PETITION NO. 4551 OF 2026
WITH
INTERIM APPLICATION (ST) NO. 11899 OF 2026
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INTERIM APPLICATION (ST) NO. 11898 OF 2026
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WRIT PETITION NO. 4476 OF 2026
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WRIT PETITION NO. 4662 OF 2026
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WRIT PETITION NO. 4708 OF 2026
WITH
WRIT PETITION NO. 5040 OF 2026
WITH
WRIT PETITION NO. 5057 OF 2026
WITH
WRIT PETITION NO. 5055 OF 2026
WITH
WRIT PETITION (ST) NO. 11456 OF 2026

Mr. Shrirang Kathneshwarkar a/w Mr. Sandeep Gupta, for
Petitioners in Sr. No. 916.

Mr. Shrirang Kathneshwarkar a/w Mr. Sandeep Gupta i/b. Mr.
Jitendra Patil, for Petitioners in Sr. No. 919.

Mr. Shrirang Kathneshwarkar a/w Mr. Sandeep Gupta i/b. Mr. Vilas
S. P.

Mr. Shrirang Kathneshwarkar a/w. Mr. Sandeep Gupta i/b. Mr.
Paresh Borse Patil, for Petitioners in Sr. No. 920.

Mr. Sanjeev Gorwadkar (Senior Advocate) a/w Mr. Akshay S.
Karlekar i/b. Mr. Sanket Sonawane i/b. Advocate P. D. Bachate, for
Petitioners in Sr. No. 917.

Ms. M. M. Deshmukh, Addl. PP for the State in Sr. No. 917.

Mr. Sujeet Karlekar a/w Mr. Akshay S. Karlekar a/w Mr. Sanket Sonawane i/b. Mr. P. D. Bachate, for Petitioners in Sr. No. 918.

Mr. Sanjeev B. Deshpande (Senior Advocate) i/b. Advocate Chetan B. Chaudhari, for Applicant in IA (St) No. 11899/2026, 11516 of 2026, IA (st) No. 11882 of 2026 and IA (St) No. 11898 of 2026 in Sr. No. 918.

Mr. Sujeet G. Karlekar a/w Mr. Akshay S. Karelkar a/w Mr. Sanket Sonawane i/b. Mr. P. D. Bachate, for Petitioners in Sr. No. 919.

Mr. Sachindra Pratap Singh, Commissioner Education, present.

Mr. Harun Attar, Joint Director Admin – Education Commissioner Office.

Mr. Sanjaykumar Rathod, Dy. Director, Nashik.

Mr. Sachin Solanki, Superintendent Education Commissioner Office.

Mr. Shridhar Deore, Dy. Education Inspector, Nashik,

Mr. M. B. Tahsildar, Deputy Secretary, present in Court.

Mr. O. A. Chandurkar Addl. GP a/w. Mrs. Nisha Mehra, AGP for the State in Sr. No. 916.

Ms. Neha Bhide GP a/w. Mr. P. P. Kakade, Addl. GP and Mr. V. G. Badgujar, AGP in WP No. 16238 of 2025.

Mrs. Neha Bhide GP a/w Mr. O. A. Chandurkar, Addl. GP & Mrs. N. M. Mehra, AGP for the State.

Ms. Neha Bhide GP a/w. Mr. P. P. Kakade, Addl. GP. Mr. Aditya Deolekar, AGP for the State.

Ms. Neha Bhide GP a/w Mr. O. A. Chandurkar, Addl. GP, Ms. P. N. Diwan, AGP for the State.

Ms. Neha Bhide GP a/w. Mr. P. P. Kakade, Addl. GP and Mr. S. H. Kankal, AGP for the State.

Ms. Neha Bhide, GP a/w. Mr. O. A. Chandurkar, Addl. GP a/w. Mr. Aditya R. Deolekar, AGP for the State.

Mrs. Neha Bhide GP a/w. Mr. P. P. Kakade, Addl. GP. a/w. Ms. P. N. Diwan, AGP for the State.

Mr. O. A. Chandurkar, Addl. GP with Mr. V. G. Badgujar, AGP in WP No. 3660 of 2026.

Mr. O. A. Chandurkar, Addl. GP with Ms. N. M. Mehra, AGP in WP No. 3653 of 2026.

Mr. O. A. Chandurkar, Addl. GP with Mr. A. K. Naik, AGP in WP No. 3662 of 2026.

Mr. O. A. Chandurkar, Addl. GP with Ms. P. N. Diwan, AGP in WP No. 3650 of 2026.

Mr. O. A. Chandurkar, Addl. GP with Ms. D. S. Deshmukh, AGP in WP No. 3658 of 2026.

Mr. O. A. Chandurkar, Addl. GP with Mr. Ms. P. M. J. Deshpande, AGP in WP No. 3655 of 2026.

Mr. O. A. Chandurkar, Addl. GP with Mr. M. M. Pabale, AGP in WP No. 3646 of 2026.

Mr. O. A. Chandurkar, Addl. GP with Ms. N. M. Mehra, AGP in WP No. 3656 of 2026.

Mr. O. A. Chandurkar, Addl. GP with Ms. Priyanka Chavan, AGP in WP No. 3654 of 2026.

Mr. O. A. Chandurkar, Addl. GP with Ms. P. N. Diwan, AGP in WP No. 3652 of 2026.

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Mr. O. A. Chandurkar, Addl. GP with Ms. N. M. Mehra, AGP in WP No. 3659 of 2026.

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Mr. O. A. Chandurkar, Addl. GP with Mr. A. K. Naik, AGP in WP No. 3661 of 2026.

Mr. O. A. Chandurkar, Addl. GP with Mr. A. R. Deolekar AGP in WP No. 4208 of 2026.

Mr. O. A. Chandurkar, Addl. GP with Ms. P. N. Diwan AGP in WP No. 4191 of 2026.

Mr. O. A. Chandurkar, Addl. GP with Ms. N. M. Mehra AGP in WP No. 4186 of 2026.

Mr. O. A. Chandurkar, Addl. GP with Ms. N. M. Mehra, AGP in WP No. 4349 of 2026.

Mr. O. A. Chandurkar, Addl. GP with Mr. V. G. Badgujar AGP in WP No. 4353 of 2026.

Mr. O. A. Chandurkar, Addl. GP with Ms. N. M. Mehra, AGP in WP No. 4376 of 2026.

Mr. P. P. Kakade, Addl. GP a/w Ms. N. M. Mehra, AGP in WP No. 4341 of 2026.

Mr. P. P. Kakade, Addl. GP a/w Ms. N. M. Mehra, AGP in WP No. 4363 of 2026.

Mr. O. A. Chandurkar, Addl. GP with Ms. D. S. Deshmukh, AGP in WP No. 4365 of 2026.

Mr. O. A. Chandurkar, Addl. GP with Ms. P. N. Diwan, AGP in WP No. 4361 of 2026.

Mr. O. A. Chandurkar, Addl. GP with Ms. P. N. Diwan, AGP in WP

No. 4334 of 2026.

Mr. O. A. Chandurkar, Addl. GP with Ms. P. N. Diwan, AGP in WP No. 4348 of 2026.

Mr. O. A. Chandurkar, Addl. GP with Ms. P. N. Diwan, AGP in WP No. 4412 of 2026.

Mr. O. A. Chandurkar, Addl. GP with Ms. N. M. Mehra AGP in WP No. 4358 of 2026.

Mr. O. A. Chandurkar, Addl. GP with Ms. N. M. Mehra AGP in WP No. 4346 of 2026.

Mr. O. A. Chandurkar, Addl. GP with Ms. N. M. Mehra AGP in WP No. 4309 of 2026.

Mr. O. A. Chandurkar, Addl. GP with Ms. N. M. Mehra AGP in WP No. 4356 of 2026.

Mr. O. A. Chandurkar, Addl. GP with Mr. A. R. Deolekar AGP in WP No. 4324 of 2026.

Mr. O. A. Chandurkar, Addl. GP with Mr. A. R. Deolekar AGP in WP No. 4377 of 2026.

Mr. O. A. Chandurkar, Addl. GP with Mr. A. R. Deolekar AGP in WP No. 4360 of 2026.

Mr. O. A. Chandurkar, Addl. GP with Mr. A. R. Deolekar AGP in WP No. 4359 of 2026.

Mr. O. A. Chandurkar, Addl. GP with Ms. Priyanka Chavan AGP in WP No. 4379 of 2026.

Mr. O. A. Chandurkar, Addl. GP with Ms. Priyanka Chavan AGP in WP No. 4378 of 2026.

Mr. O. A. Chandurkar, Addl. GP with Ms. Priyanka Chavan AGP in WP No. 4323 of 2026.

Mr. O. A. Chandurkar, Addl. GP with Ms. D. S. Deshmukh AGP in WP No. 4331 of 2026.

Mr. O. A. Chandurkar, Addl. GP with Ms. D. S. Deshmukh AGP in WP No. 4375 of 2026.

Mr. O. A. Chandurkar, Addl. GP with Ms. D. S. Deshmukh AGP in WP No. 4411 of 2026.

Mr. O. A. Chandurkar, Addl. GP with Ms. P. M. J. Deshpande AGP in WP No. 4381 of 2026.

Mr. O. A. Chandurkar, Addl. GP with Ms. P. M. J. Deshpande AGP in WP No. 4305 of 2026.

Mr. O. A. Chandurkar, Addl. GP with Ms. P. M. J. Deshpande AGP in WP No. 4384 of 2026.

Mr. O. A. Chandurkar, Addl. GP with Mr. V. G. Badgujar AGP in WP No. 4380 of 2026, WP No. 4410 of 2026, WP No. 4383 of

2026, WP No. 4315 of 2026.

Mr. P. P. Kakade, Addl. GP with Ms. P. N. Diwan, AGP in WP No. 4306 of 2026, WP No. 4312 of 2026, WP No. 4314 of 2026, WP No. 4311 of 2026, WP No. 4382 of 2026 and WP No. 4318 of 2026.

Mr. P. P. Kakade, Addl. GP with Ms. N. M. Mehra, AGP in WP No. 4546 of 2026.

Mr. P. P. Kakade, Addl. GP with Mr. A. K. Naik, AGP in WP No. 4550 of 2026, WP No. 4545 of 2026, WP No. 4547 of 2026 and WP No. 4548 of 2026.

Mr. P. P. Kakade, Addl. GP with Ms. D. S. Deshmukh, AGP in WP No. 4562 of 2026, WP No. 4549 of 2026 and WP No. 4554 of 2026.

Mr. P. P. Kakade, Addl. GP with Mr. M. M. Pabale, AGP in WP No. 4552 of 2026, IA St. No. 11882 of 2026, WP No. 4551 of 2026.

Mr. P. P. Kakade, Addl. GP. With Mr. V. G. Badgujar, AGP in IA (St) No. 11899 of 2026.

Mr. P. P. Kakade, Addl. GP with Mr. V. G. Badgujar, AGP in WP No. 4553 of 2026.

Mr. O. A. Chandurkar, Addl. GP. a/w Mr. V. G. Badgujar, AGP in IA St. No. 11898 of 2026.

Mr. P. P. Kakade, Addl. GP with Mr. V. G. Badgujar, AGP In WP Nos, 4476, 4662 and 4708 of 2026.

Mr. P. P. Kakade, Addl. GP with Ms. Priyanka Chavan, AGP in WP No. 5040 of 2026.

Mr. P. P. Kakade, Addl. GP. With Mr. M. M. Pabale, AGP in WP No. 5057 of 2026.

Mr. P. P. Kakade, Addl. GP with Ms. D. S. Deshmukh, AGP in WP No. 5055 of 2026.

Mr. P. P. Kakade, Addl. GP a/w Mr. A. K. Naik AGP a/w Ms. P. N. Diwan, AGP a/w Ms. N. M. Mehra, AGP a/w Mr. V. G. Badgujar, AGP and Ms. D. S. Deshmukh, AGP with Ms. Priyanka Chavan, AGP for the State.

**CORAM : RAVINDRA V. GHUGE &
HITEN S. VENEGAVKAR, JJ.**

DATE : 22nd APRIL, 2026

P.C. :-

1. Interim Application No. 11898 of 2026 has been filed

by the Applicant, namely Mr. Pankaj Diliprao Salunke.

2. We have heard the learned Senior Advocate, Mr. Deshpande, through the VC mode on behalf of the Applicant. We are informed that the Applicant is an agriculturist who has lodged complaints against education societies, employees of teaching and non-teaching staff, educational institutions, purported bogus approvals, purported Shalarth IDs, etc. From the said Interim Application, we do not find that the Applicant has explained his locus or furnished any personal details, except stating that he is engaged in social work and has been consistently pursuing issues concerning transparency and legality in the functioning of public authorities.

3. Prima facie, what we find is that the Applicant has filed general and ambiguous complaints before various authorities, and that State authorities, including those at the level of the Commissioner of Education, have entertained such applications, virtually granting an audience to strangers, contrary to the dictum of the Bombay High Court. This has resulted in inquiries being initiated into the appointments of thousands of teachers, as well as

officers entrusted with the task of granting approvals and issuing Shalarth IDs. On instructions, the learned Advocates for the Petitioners before us submit that, information on a page found on Google, pertaining to Mr. Pankaj Diliprao Salunke, suggests that he has been described therein as a ‘blackmailer.

4. We would expect the learned Additional Government Pleader to gather information through the police authorities, and place before us the record containing the details and background of Mr. Pankaj Diliprao Salunke. We also request the learned Senior Advocate, Mr. Deshpande, to obtain instructions regarding the Applicant and to make a statement as to whether any complaint has been lodged against the Applicant or whether any FIR has been registered against him.

5. We have delivered an extensive order on 7th March, 2026.

6. In Writ Petition No. 3839 of 2026 and connected Petitions filed by *Hemant Baliram Deore & Ors. vs. The State of Maharashtra & Ors.*, a Judgment was delivered on 27th March,

2026, wherein approvals and / or Shalarth IDs had been cancelled by the authorities after conducting a purported hearing on show cause notices. The said Judgment dealt with five issues that were framed, and on the basis of the record before us, as well as the judgments of the Hon'ble Supreme Court, we concluded that the show cause notices issued to the Petitioners/employees were vague and did not contain necessary particulars. Relying on the law laid down by the Hon'ble Supreme Court, the said show cause notices were quashed and set aside, and the consequential adverse orders were also set aside.

7. Nevertheless, this Court granted liberty to the statutory authorities to follow the procedure prescribed by law and to issue show cause notices to those persons whose approvals or Shalarth IDs were sought to be cancelled, only if a case of misrepresentation or fraud was made out. Needless to state that what applies to these teaching and non-teaching employees, would equally apply to authorities of the rank of Education Officers or Deputy Directors.

8. If the State desires to proceed against such officers for having committed irregularities or illegalities in the discharge of

their duties as Education Officers or Deputy Directors of Education, the State, being the employer, would be well within its authority to issue proper show cause notices setting out the specific grounds on which misconduct is alleged. Thereafter, in accordance with the law laid down by the Courts and the applicable service rules, action may be taken only upon following due legal procedure. Any adverse order, if passed, must be a reasoned order based on the material available on record and the explanation tendered by the noticees.

9. In the backdrop of our order dated 07.03.2026, we find that even the State Government has not been able to adhere to a definite statutory regime while dealing with complaints against teaching and non-teaching staff, as well as officers of the rank of Education Officers and Deputy Directors. Such action ought not to be based on complaints lodged by strangers.

10. We have put it to the learned Additional Government Pleader and the AGPs appearing before us as to whether it would be appropriate to appoint a retired Chief Justice or a Judge of the Bombay High Court, to head a committee to be constituted for considering all such grievances and to examine the material that

may be placed before it. Needless to state, a Special Investigation Team (SIT) may perform the task of collecting and placing such material before the said committee. The Chairperson of the committee could be a retired Chief Justice or Judge of the Bombay High Court. The other members of the committee may include authorities of the rank of Additional Director General of Police, a senior officer not below the rank of ACP from the Intelligence Department, either from the Intelligence Wing or nominated by the Additional Director General (Intelligence) or Director General (Intelligence), as the case may be, a senior officer from the Cyber Cell not below an appropriate senior rank, an educationist, a retired Vice-Chancellor residing in Mumbai and such other persons who may have the requisite expertise and capacity to meaningfully contribute to the task entrusted to the committee.

11. The learned GP/AGPs submit that the Commissioner of the Education Department of the State of Maharashtra, Mr. Sachindra Pratap Singh, who is participating in these proceedings online from his chamber, would be required to consult the concerned departmental heads and other stakeholders of the State Government. It is only after due deliberation on these suggestions

that the State Government would instruct the office of the Government Pleader to make an appropriate statement before this Court on the next date.

12. Insofar as Criminal Petitions filed either prior to or subsequent to the registration of FIRs are concerned, in cases where FIRs have been registered, the Petitioners are at liberty to approach the learned Single Judge for seeking quashing of the FIR.

13. In the Criminal Petitions before us today, which are filed purely for seeking directions, we expect the State Government to maintain status quo with regard to the proposed lodging of FIRs until 6th May, 2026 in view of the foregoing paragraphs of this order read with the order dated 7th March, 2026. Needless to state that inquiries being conducted at the level of the Commissioner of Education, as well as inquiries by the SIT, or the issuance of notices to any party as part of a fair procedure, shall continue unhindered. However, such notices shall disclose all necessary particulars.

14. It is undisputed before us that the teaching and non-teaching staff are in employment, their approval orders and Shalarth

IDs are intact, and none of them have been suspended. It is also undisputed that officers such as Education Officers and Deputy Directors of Education are likewise in service and have neither been suspended nor terminated. Yet, in all these cases, the salaries of the Petitioners, belonging to either of these categories, have been stopped under the orders of the Commissioner of Education, despite their continued discharge of day-to-day duties, and without even issuing a show cause notice as to why their salaries should be withheld when their services remain intact.

15. The Petitioners have pointed out that their salaries have been stopped, with observance of the Principles of Natural Justice. We order that, those orders passed without affording an opportunity of hearing, without any reasons and without due adherence to the principles of natural justice, stopping the payment of salaries of officers/employees who are in service, shall stand stayed, and their salaries shall continue to be paid until a proper order is passed, by following the dictum in *Hemant Baliram Deore & Ors. vs. The State of Maharashtra & Ors. (supra)*.

16. We have taken an overall consensus of the learned

Senior Advocates appearing in these matters, as well as the learned Additional GP/AGPs and other Advocates representing the stakeholders, as regards the next date of hearing. In response to our query as to whether these matters should be posted before or after the vacation, the consensus is that the matters be listed before the vacation.

17. Accordingly, we list these matters on **6th May, 2026**, in the ‘Urgent Supplementary Board’, only for the purpose of considering the constitution of a committee to be headed either by a retired Chief Justice or a retired Judge of the Bombay High Court.

(HITEN S. VENEGAVKAR, J.) (RAVINDRA V. GHUGE, J.)