IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT BOMBAY
CIRCUIT BENCH AT KOLHAPUR
CIVIL APPELLATE JURISDICTION

PUBLIC INTEREST LITIGATION NO. 100 OF 2025

Kusteeveer Khashaba Jadhav Foundation Thr Its Founder Ranjeet K Jadhav ...Petitioner

Versus

The Union Of India Thr. Secretary And Others ...Respondents

Mr. Sangram Desai a/w Ms. Prerana Samani, Ms. Sanjana Desai, Mr. Advait Vajaratkar, for the Petitioner.
Mr. Vijay Killedar a/w Mr. Shivraj Jagadale, Mr. Rahul Rote, for the Respondent Nos. 1 and 2.
Ms. Tejas Kapre, AGP for the Respondent-State.

CORAM : SHARMILA U. DESHMUKH & SHAILESH P. BRAHME, JJ.

DATE : NOVEMBER 19, 2026

P. C. :

1. By the present Public Interest Litigation ("**PIL**"), the Petitioner seeks consideration of conferment of Padma Vibhushan Award posthumously upon late Shri. Khashaba Dadasaheb Jadhav, who was India's first individual Olympic medalist.

2. Mr. Desai, learned counsel for the Petitioner submits that though the State Government has repeatedly recommended the name of late Shri. Khashaba Dadasaheb Jadhav to the Central Government for conferment of the Padma Awards, the same has not been considered. He fairly submits that though a writ of mandamus cannot be issued to

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direct conferment of the award, there is no reason and no justification for refusal to consider the recommendation of the State Government. He submits that the 30th April, 2026 communication by the Under Secretary (Public) of the Government of India to the Panel Advocate Mr. Killedar would indicate that the non-consideration is on the basis of a non-existent rule that only if a person proposed to be honoured has died recently say within a period of one year preceding the republic day on which it is proposed to announce the award, the Government could consider giving an award posthumously. He draws support from the Rules/Regulations framed for the award of the decoration Padma Vibhushan dated 2nd January, 1954. He would also point out the selection criteria, which provides for invitation of recommendation every year from 15th March to 31st July from all State/Union Territory Governments and also from other sources such as Members of Parliament as also private individual bodies, etc. He would further point out the recommendation made by the ex-member of Parliament, Member of Legislative Assembly, etc in order to buttress his submission that despite the recommendation by various sources, the Padma Awards Committee has declined to consider the recommendation as is evident from the communication dated 30th April, 2026.

3. Mr. Killedar, learned counsel for the Respondent would submit that the recommendations have to be forwarded every year from 15th

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March to 31st July, and the State Government has forwarded the recommendation on 4th August, 2026. He would submit that the consideration, if any, can be for the year 2028 and not for 2027, as the window has already been closed.

4. With the assistance of learned counsel for the parties, we have gone through the papers and proceedings.

5. Late Shri. Khashaba Dadasaheb Jadhav was a resident of village Goleshwar, Satara and had won a bronze medal in freestyle (bantamweight) wrestling in 1952 Olympic Games at Helsinki, Finland. It is brought to our notice that the Government of India had printed a postage stamp in his name in the year 1952 and in the year 2000 he was honoured with Arjuna Award. The communication by Mr. Shrinivas Patil, former Governor of Sikkim dated 23rd August, 2020 notes that since 1952 the bronze medal won by late Shri. Khashaba Dadasaheb Jadhav in wrestling was the only individual Olympic medal won by any Indian for the next 44 years. Being cognizant of the accomplishment of late Shri. Khashaba Dadasaheb Jadhav, the State Government on 4th August, 2026 have forwarded the recommendation for Padma Awards, 2027 to the Joint Secretary (Public) for conferment of Padma Awards. There are a total of 80 nominations of which 2 nominations are for Padma Vibhushan, 5 nominations for Padma Bhushan and 73 nominations for Padma Shri. At serial no. 28 is the nomination of late Shri. Khashaba

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Dadasaheb Jadhav posthumous in the sports category for Padma Shri. The communication dated 30th April, 2026 addressed by the Under Secretary to the Panel Advocate is evidently contrary to the Rules, which have been framed. Rule 7 of the Rules notified on 2nd January, 1954 provides for the decoration to be awarded posthumously. We have gone through the Rules and we do not find any such Rule that the conferment posthumously can be only, in the event, the person proposed to be honoured had died within a period of 1 year preceding the republic day. Mr. Desai has also filed an additional affidavit placing on record the persons to whom the Padma Awards have been honoured posthumously. There are about 22 persons who have been honoured posthumously after many years of their death. We are therefore not inclined to consider the communication dated 30th April, 2026 as a reason for non-consideration of the name of late Shri. Khashaba Dadasaheb Jadhav for conferment of Padma Awards. The selection criteria placed on record clearly states that there is no rigid criteria or trenchant formula for selection and it looks for lifetime achievement of an individual while making selection. Though, we are conscious of the fact that no writ of mandamus can be issued directing a positive conferment of the Padma Award upon late Shri. Khashaba Dadasaheb Jadhav, in view of the recommendation forwarded by the State Government on 4th August, 2026, which includes the name of late Shri.

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Khashaba Dadasaheb Jadhav, the Padma Award Committee represented through its Chairpersons/Member Secretary through the Ministry of Home Affairs will consider the recommendations of the State Government in its true letter and spirit alongwith all material forwarded by the State Government supporting its decision for the recommendation.

6. With these observations, the PIL stands disposed of.

[SHAILESH P. BRAHME, J.] **[SHARMILA U. DESHMUKH, J.]**

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