News

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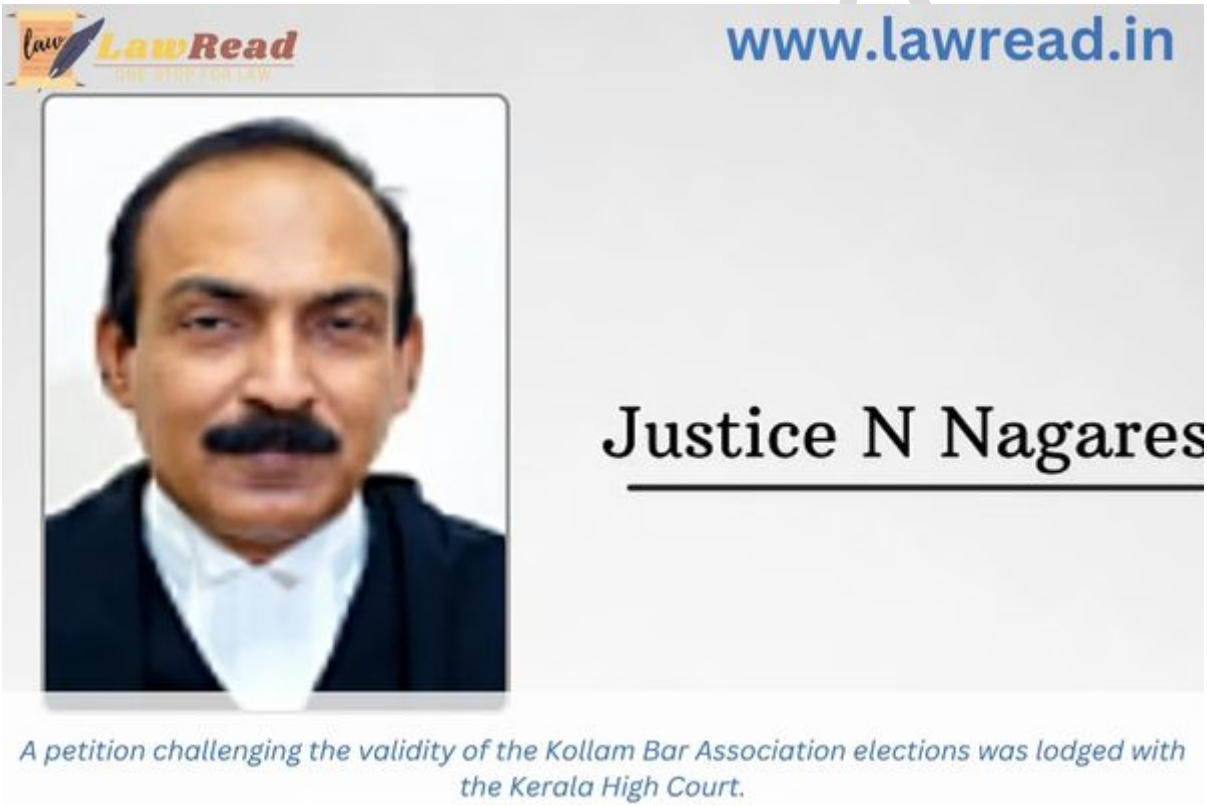

A petition challenging the validity of the Kollam Bar Association elections was lodged with the Kerala High Court.

The petitioner claims that the Returning Officer was biased and that there were irregularities in the counting of votes for Constituency No. 3, and they want the results of the Kollam Bar Association elections nullified and rescheduled.

Legal professionals

In a recent case [Dheeraj Ravi v Bar Council of Kerala & ors.], lawyer Dheeraj Ravi challenged his recent loss in the elections for the Kollam Bar Association's Board of Directors. The Kerala High Court has now requested a response from the Bar Council of Kerala and the Kollam Bar Association.

The matter is scheduled for a hearing on August 8, and Justice N. Nagaresh notified the respondents through messenger.

Nagaresh, Justice N

Petitioner Ravi, who served as president of the Kollam Bar Association and ran for office in 2025, lost by a single vote following a contentious recount.

He petitioned the court, claiming that the Kollam Bar Association elections held in July 2025 were marred by major breaches of electoral norms and procedural irregularities.

In the first round of voting, Ravi and his opponent were neck and neck, as stated in the petition. But in the subsequent recount, a vote that was obviously cast in Ravi's favor was ruled unlawful, and he lost by one vote.

He noted that despite a tie during the original vote count, the recount was undertaken without the returning officer's personal supervision, in contravention of basic requirements of fairness and openness.

The petitioner asserted that the ballots were handed over to volunteers for recounting without any oversight and the final tabulation sheet was reused and overwritten, jeopardizing the trustworthiness of the result.

"The recounting was vitiated to the extent that the tabulation sheet was reused and it was overwritten. The same was not done by the Returning Officer, but another advocate of the bar organization. This vitiated the transparency and integrity of the recounting process. This is outright breach of basic electoral standards.", the petition continued.

The petitioner highlighted multiple irregularities before and during the polling, which included, absence of a signed voter register, failure to verify identities of voters, and the presence of unauthorised individuals casting votes and accused the outgoing office bearers of the association, including the then president and secretary of the association interfering with the polling and counting process.

The petition said that they aggressively campaigned for a panel of handpicked candidates, issued promotional materials and were physically present within the voting station and counting hall, influencing polling officials known to them.

The exact returning officer who handled the election and oversaw the recount was later chosen as Convenor of the Grievance Committee responsible with handling election related concerns, it was submitted.

This was a blatant conflict of interest as the officer now retained the jurisdiction to arbitrate disputes originating from an election he himself had conducted, the petitioner said.

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The petitioner also detailed an incidence of physical assault during the recount, where his polling agent was manhandled in the presence of the returning officer.

In light of these claims, the petitioner has sought the Court to nullify the election results for his constituency and to compel a repeat poll under court supervised conditions. He also urged the appointment of an Advocate Commissioner to supervise a fresh poll or perform a proper recount after taking charge of all electoral materials.

The petition was filed through advocates Akhil Suresh, Kalliyani Krishna B, Amrith MJ, Anita Elizebeth Babu and Rahul T.

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