
IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT BOMBAY

CIVIL APPELLATE JURISDICTION

ARBITRATION PETITION NO.232 OF 2025

Shiva Ads (India) Pvt. Ltd.

....Petitioner

Versus

The Poona Club Limited

....Respondent

Mr. Abhijeet V. Jangale, *for Petitioner.*

Mr. Purushottam G. Chavan, *for Respondent No.1*

CORAM: SOMASEKHAR SUNDARESAN, J.

DATE : DECEMBER 04, 2025

ORDER :

1. This Petition has been filed under Section 11 of the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996 (***"the Act"***), seeking appointment of an arbitrator in connection with disputes and differences that are said to have arisen between the parties under agreements dated December 27, 2022 and July 19, 2023 (***"Agreements"***). The arbitration agreements are contained in Clauses 9 & 7 (Found at Page Nos. 32 & 39 of the Petition) of the Agreements. In the interest of brevity, the arbitration agreements are not being extracted here. Suffice it to say that this matter falls within the jurisdiction of this Court.

2. It is apparent from the record that the arbitration agreement was invoked by Petitioner on June 16, 2025.

3. The only objection from the Respondent is that the termination is for cause and owing to public safety issues, the hoardings of the Petitioner had to be demolished. This squarely falls within the domain of the merits of the matter, and the Learned Arbitral Tribunal will examine whether any apportionment of liability is appropriate amongst the parties. Since the existence of the arbitration agreement is not in doubt, it is not necessary to burden this order with further details. Suffice it to say that the matter under dispute covered by this Petition stands referred to the Arbitral Tribunal.

4. The scope of review under Section 11 is explicitly set out in Section 11(6A) of the Act. It is now trite law, with particular regard to the decisions of a seven-judge bench in the *Interplay Judgement*¹ followed by multiple others, including *SBI General*² and *Patel*³ that the Section 11 Court ought not to venture beyond examining the existence of a validly existing arbitration agreement that has been formally executed. Even questions of existential substance is a matter that falls squarely in the domain of the arbitral tribunal, in view of Section 16 of the Act.

¹ *In Re: Interplay Between Arbitration Agreement under Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996 and Stamp Act, 1899* (2024) 6 SCC 1

² *SBI General Insurance Co. Ltd. Vs. Krish Spinning* – 2024 SCC OnLine 1974

³ *Ajay Madhusudan Patel Vs. Jyotindra S. Patel* – 2024 SCC OnLine, 2597

5. Being satisfied that an arbitration agreement is validly in existence, and that arbitration has been duly invoked, it is in the fitness of things to refer the disputes and differences between the parties in connection with the aforesaid agreement to arbitration by a Sole Arbitrator.

6. In these circumstances, this Petition is hereby *finally disposed of*, in terms of the following order:

A] Shri. Rajendra Brijmohan Agrawal, Retired District Judge, Pune is hereby appointed as the Sole Arbitrator to adjudicate upon the disputes and differences between the parties arising out of and in connection with the Agreement referred to above;

Address:- T6B-1003, Godrej Infinity,
Behind Renuka Mata Mandir,
Keshavnagar Mundhwa,
Pune – 411 036.

Email Id : rejoindra.agrawal1958@gmail.com

B] A copy of this Order will be communicated to the Learned Sole Arbitrator by the Advocates for the Petitioner within a period of one week from the date of upload of this order. The Petition shall provide the contact and communication particulars of the parties to the Arbitral Tribunal along with a copy of this Order;

C] The Learned Sole Arbitrator is requested to forward the statutory Statement of Disclosure under Section 11(8) read with Section 12(1) of the Act to the parties within a period of two weeks from receipt of a copy of this Order;

D] The parties shall appear before the Learned Sole Arbitrator on such date and at such place as indicated, to obtain appropriate directions with regard to conduct of the arbitration including fixing a schedule for pleadings, examination of witnesses, if any, schedule of hearings etc. At such meeting, the parties shall provide a valid and functional email address along with mobile and landline numbers of the respective Advocates of the parties to the Arbitral Tribunal. Communications to such email addresses shall constitute valid service of correspondence in connection with the arbitration;

E] All arbitral costs and fees of the Arbitral Tribunal shall be borne by the parties equally in the first instance, and shall be subject to any final Award that may be passed by the Tribunal in relation to costs.

7. Needless to say, nothing contained in this order is an expression of an opinion on merits of the matter or the relative strength of the parties. All issues on merits are expressly kept open to be agitated before the arbitral tribunal appointed hereby.

8. All actions required to be taken pursuant to this order shall be taken upon receipt of a downloaded copy as available on this Court's website.

[SOMASEKHAR SUNDARESAN, J.]