

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT BOMBAY  
ORDINARY ORIGINAL CIVIL JURISDICTION  
IN ITS COMMERCIAL DIVISION  
COMMERCIAL ARBITRATION APPLICATION (L) NO. 20465 OF 2025  
WITH  
COMMERCIAL ARBITRATION PETITION NO. 719 OF 2024

Anees Bazmee

...Petitioner

***Versus***

Tarak Mansukhlal Mehta

...Respondent

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**Ms. Neeta Jain, i/b Ashok Purohit & Co., for the Petitioner.**

***None for Respondent.***

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CORAM : SOMASEKHAR SUNDARESAN, J.

DATE : AUGUST 19, 2025

**ORDER :**

1. This Application 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 an agreement dated December 17, 2022 (***“Agreement”***). The arbitration agreement is contained in Clause 18 (found at Page 60 of the Application). In the interest of brevity, the arbitration agreement is 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 the Applicant on March 28, 2025. A reply dated April 29, 2025 is filed to the said invocation.

3. Since existence of the arbitration agreement is not in dispute, no useful purpose would be served keeping the Application seeking appointment of an arbitrator pending any further.

4. In these circumstances, the Section 11 Application is disposed of appointing an arbitral tribunal in the following terms:-

A) Ms. Sushma Nagaraj, a learned advocate of this Court 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;

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Point, Mumbai – 400 021.  
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B) A copy of this Order will be communicated to the Learned Sole Arbitrator by the Advocates for the

Applicant within a period of one week from the date of upload of this order. The Applicant 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 Advocates for the Applicant so as to enable them to file the same in the Registry of this Court. The Registry of this Court shall retain the said Statement on the file of this Application and a copy of the same shall be furnished by the Advocates for the Applicant to the Respondent;

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.

5. 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*<sup>1</sup> followed by multiple others, including *SBI General*<sup>2</sup> and *Patel*<sup>3</sup> 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.

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

<sup>2</sup> *SBI General Insurance Co. Ltd. Vs. Krish Spinning*, 2024 SCC OnLine 1974

<sup>3</sup> *Ajay Madhusudan Patel Vs. Jyotindra S. Patel*, 2024 SCC OnLine, 2597

6. 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.

7. The Section 9 Petition along with the relief granted hitherto shall stand converted into a proceeding under Section 17 for further consideration by the arbitral tribunal.

8. In these circumstances, both the Application under Section 11 as well as the Section 9 Petition are hereby ***finally disposed of***, in the aforesaid terms.

9. 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.

10. 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.]**

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August 19, 2025

Ashwini Vallakati