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* **IN THE HIGH COURT OF DELHI AT NEW DELHI**

+ **ARB.P. 1726/2025**

M/S RELIANCE ELEKTRIK WORKS

.....Petitioner

Through: Mr. Avinash Kumar Trivedi and Mr.
Rahul Aggarwal, Advs.

versus

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT GOVT OF NCT OF DELHI

.....Respondent

Through: Mr. Dhruv Kumar, Adv.

CORAM:

HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE JASMEET SINGH

ORDER

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26.11.2025

Since there was a holiday on 25.11.2025, the matter is taken up for hearing today.

1. This is a petition filed under Section 11(6) of Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996 seeking appointment of an Arbitrator for adjudication of disputed between the parties.
2. The brief facts are that the petitioner participated in the percentage rate tender issued for the execution of the work of "*Construction of additional classrooms in existing premises under jurisdiction under DDE (South-East) (Priority-II) SH: C/O classrooms, labs & toilets i/c Internal & External Water Supply, Sanitary & Electric Installations, Development of Site and Firefighting System etc. at SKV Hari Ngar, Ashram, GBSS, Sarai Kale Khan & Gov. Co.-Ed. , Middle School , Sarai Kale Khan, Vidut Nagar, New Delhi (School ID: 1924043, 1924018 & 195418) (Package-D)*".
3. The respondent declared the petitioner as successful participant and



issued Letter of Acceptance dated 05.01.2019. Thereafter, the respondent issued Letter of Award dated 18.01.2019. Thus, the parties entered into an Agreement for execution of the work on total contractual amount of Rs. 24,64,23,456/-.

4. The said Agreement contains an arbitration clause being Clause No. 25 of the General Conditions of Contract, which reads as under:-

“CLAUSE 25

Settlement of Disputes & Arbitration

Except where otherwise provided in the contract, all questions and disputes relating to the meaning of the specifications, design, drawings and instructions here-in before mentioned and as to the quality of workmanship or materials used on the work or as to any other question, claim, right, matter or thing whatsoever in any way arising out of or relating to the contract, designs, drawings, specifications, estimates, instructions, orders or these conditions or otherwise concerning the works or the execution or failure to execute the same whether arising during the progress of the work or after the cancellation, termination, completion or abandonment thereof shall be dealt with as mentioned hereinafter:

(i) If the contractor considers any work demanded of him to be outside the requirements of the contract, or disputes any drawings, record or decision given in writing by the Engineer-in-Charge or if the Engineer in Charge considers any act or decision of the contractor on any matter in connection with or arising out of the contract or carrying out of the work, to be unacceptable and is disputed, such party shall promptly within 15 days of the arising of



the disputes request the Chief Engineer or where there is no Chief Engineer, the Additional Director General (CE/ADG) who shall refer the disputes to Dispute Redressal Committee (DRC) within 15 days along with a list of disputes with amounts claimed if any in respect of each such dispute. The Dispute Redressal Committee (DRC) shall give the opposing party two weeks for a written response, and, give its decision within a period of 60 days extendable by 30 days by consent of both the parties from the receipt of reference from CE/ADG. The constitution of Dispute Redressal Committee (DRC) shall be as indicated in Schedule 'F'. Provided that no party shall be represented before the Dispute Redressal Committee by an advocate/legal counsel etc. If the Dispute Redressal Committee (DRC) fails to give its decision within the aforesaid period or any party is dissatisfied with the decision of Dispute Redressal Committee (DRC) or expiry of time limit given above, then either party may within a period of 30 days from the receipt of the decision of Dispute Redressal Committee (DRC), give notice to the Chief Engineer, CPWD, in charge of the work or if there be no Chief Engineer, the Additional Director General of the concerned region of CPWD or if there be no Additional Director General, the Director General, CPWD (CE/ADG/DG) for appointment of arbitrator on prescribed proforma as per Appendix XV under intimation to the other party.

It is a term of contract that each party invoking arbitration must exhaust the aforesaid mechanism of settlement of claims/disputes prior to invoking arbitration.



The CE/ADG/DG shall in such case appoint the sole arbitrator or one of the three arbitrators as the case may be within 30 days of receipt of such a request and refer such disputes to arbitration. Wherever the Arbitral Tribunal consists of three Arbitrators, the contractor shall appoint one arbitrator within 30 days of making request for arbitration or of receipt of request by Engineer-in-charge to CE/ADG/DG for appointment of arbitrator, as the case may be, and two appointed arbitrators shall appoint the third arbitrator who shall act as the Presiding Arbitrator. In the event of

- a. A party fails to appoint the second Arbitrator, or*
- b. The two appointed Arbitrators fail to appoint the Presiding Arbitrator, then*

The Director General, CPWD shall appoint the second or Presiding Arbitrator as the case may be.

(ii) Disputes or difference shall be referred for adjudication through arbitration by a Tribunal having sole arbitrator where Tendered amount is Rs. 100 Crore or less. Where Tendered Value is more than Rs. 100 Crore, Tribunal shall consist of three Arbitrators as above. The requirements of the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996 (26 of 1996) and any further statutory modifications or re-enactment thereof and the rules made there under and for the time being in force shall be applicable. It is a term of this contract that the party invoking arbitration shall give a list of disputes with amounts claimed, if any, in respect of each such dispute along with the notice for appointment of arbitrator and giving reference to the decision of the DRC.



It is also a term of this contract that any member of the Arbitration Tribunal shall be a Graduate Engineer with experience in handling public works engineering contracts at a level not lower than Chief Engineer (Joint Secretary level of Government of India). This shall be treated as a mandatory qualification to be appointed as arbitrator.

Parties, before or at the time of appointment of Arbitral Tribunal may agree in writing for fast track arbitration as per the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996 (26 of 1996) as amended in 2015.

Subject to provision in the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996 (26 of 1996) as amended in 2015 whereby the counter claims if any can be directly filed before the arbitrator without any requirement of reference by the appointing authority, the arbitrator shall adjudicate on only such disputes as are referred to him by the appointing authority and give separate award against each dispute and claim referred to him and in all cases where the total amount of the claims by any party exceeds Rs. 1,00,000/-, the arbitrator shall give reasons for the award.

It is also a term of the contract that if any fees are payable to the arbitrator, these shall be paid as per the Act.

The place of arbitration shall be as mentioned in Schedule F. In case there is no mention of place of arbitration, the arbitral tribunal shall determine the place of arbitration.

The venue of the arbitration shall be such place as may be fixed by the Arbitral Tribunal in consultation with both the parties. Failing



any such agreement, then the Arbitral Tribunal shall decide the venue.”

5. Since disputes arose between the parties, the petitioner invoked arbitration *vide* legal notice dated 14.04.2025 and thereafter, filed the present petition.

6. Mr. Kumar, learned counsel appears for the respondent and states that the arbitration agreement is admitted. However, his only objection is that the arbitral mechanism as envisaged under Clause No. 25 of the General Conditions of Contract was not followed.

7. In the present case, petitioner *vide* letter dated 26.06.2024 under Clause No. 25(i) of the General Conditions of Contract, addressed to the Executive Engineer with a copy to the Superintendent Engineer of the respondent elaborating its grievances. The Executive Engineer of the respondent replied to the said letter *vide* letter dated 12.07.2024, declining all the claims of the petitioner.

8. The petitioner then again approached the Chief Engineer (Projects) *vide* letter dated 30.07.2024 in terms of Clause No. 25 of the General Conditions of Contract, seeking constitution of the Dispute Redressal Committee.

9. Since the respondent failed to constitute the Dispute Redressal Committee for the adjudication of disputes for more than 4 months, the petitioner addressed another letter dated 04.12.2024 to Chief Engineer for the appointment of an Arbitrator to settle the disputes and pending claims. The petitioner also sent reminder letter dated 07.04.2025.

10. The Chief Engineer *vide* letter dated 08.04.2025 rejected all the claims of the petitioner.



11. The petitioner again addressed respondent letter dated 14.04.2025 invoking Clause No. 25(i) and (ii) of the General Conditions of Contract requesting the respondent to appoint an Arbitrator. A reminder letter dated 04.06.2025, was sent to the respondent seeking appointment of an Arbitrator. Thereafter, the present petition has been filed.

12. In view of the aforesaid, I am of the view that the petitioner has duly followed the procedure provided under Clause No. 25 of the General Conditions of Contract.

13. I am satisfied that there is a valid arbitration agreement and disputes between the parties which need to be adjudicated through arbitral mechanism.

14. For the said reason, the petition is allowed, with the following directions:

- i) Mr. Rakesh Kumar Agrawal, SDG, CPWD (Mobile No. 7542030167) is appointed as a Sole Arbitrator to adjudicate the disputes between the parties.
- ii) The arbitration will be held under the aegis and rules of the Delhi International Arbitration Centre, Delhi High Court, Sher Shah Road, New Delhi (hereinafter, referred to as the 'DIAC').
- iii) The remuneration of the learned Arbitrator shall be in terms of DIAC (Administrative Cost and Arbitrators' Fees) Rules, 2018.
- iv) The learned Arbitrator is requested to furnish a declaration in terms of Section 12 of the Act prior to entering into the reference.
- v) It is made clear that all the rights and contentions of the parties, including as to the arbitrability of any of the claim, any other preliminary objection, as well as claims/counter-claims and merits



of the dispute of either of the parties, are left open for adjudication by the learned Arbitrator.

- vi) The parties shall approach the learned Arbitrator within two weeks from today.

JASMEET SINGH, J

NOVEMBER 26, 2025/DM