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

+ **W.P.(C) 1635/2026**

KARTIK RANA

.....Petitioner

Through: Mr. Sudhir Naagar, Ms. Rajshree
Singh & Mr. Aditya Chauhan,
Advocates.

versus

AIRPORT AUTHORITY OF INDIA

.....Respondent

Through: Mr. Digvijay Rai, SC, AAI with Mr.
Archit Mishra, Advocates.

CORAM:

HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE SANJEEV NARULA

ORDER

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05.02.2026

1. The Petitioner applied for the post of Junior Assistant (Fire Service) with the Airports Authority of India ("AAI"). According to the Petitioner, his application was successfully submitted, and he was issued an admit card. He appeared in the Computer Based Test ("CBT"), successfully cleared the same, and his name appeared in the list of successful candidates published on 04th September, 2025. Thereafter, he was required to report for document verification and completion of physical tests, which were scheduled between 28th December, 2025 and 20th January, 2026. At that stage, the Petitioner produced a domicile certificate showing that he is a domicile of Delhi, having been born, brought up, and educated in Delhi. However, his candidature was rejected on the ground of an invalid domicile certificate, leading to the filing of the present writ petition.

2. Mr. Sudhir Naagar, counsel for the Petitioner, submits that once the Petitioner had been shortlisted and called for the second stage of the recruitment process, the domicile certificate produced at that stage ought to



have been accepted. He contends that the advertisement did not stipulate that the domicile certificate must have been issued prior to the cut-off date of 05th March, 2025, and therefore the Respondents have acted arbitrarily by reading into the advertisement a condition which was never notified. It is further argued that the Petitioner's status as a domicile of Delhi is not in dispute, as he was born, brought up, and educated in Delhi, and his residence and other supporting documents have been found to be genuine. The domicile certificate merely formalises an already existing factual status, and issuance of the certificate at a later date cannot negate his substantive eligibility. The impugned rejection is thus arbitrary, hyper-technical, and violative of Articles 14 and 16 of the Constitution of India, particularly when the Petitioner has otherwise cleared the CBT and secured marks above the cut-off.

3. On the other hand, Mr. Digvijay Rai, SC for the Respondent, opposes the petition and submits that no indulgence can be shown to the Petitioner, as he failed to upload the domicile certificate at the stage of submission of the online application, which was a mandatory requirement clearly spelt out in the instructions to applicants. It is submitted that documents uploaded at the application stage are subsequently verified, and therefore mere participation in and clearing of the CBT does not confer any vested right. This is not a case where the domicile certificate was issued after the cut-off date and uploaded later, but a case where the Petitioner admittedly never uploaded the domicile certificate at the initial stage. Consequently, the document verification process necessarily failed. The furnishing of the domicile certificate at a later stage, it is contended, is of no consequence. It is further pointed out that several other candidates were similarly rejected on



account of invalid domicile certificates, including five candidates from Delhi, and therefore the Petitioner has not been singled out.

4. The Court has considered the aforementioned contentions. Since the controversy pertains to eligibility, it is necessary to advert to the relevant conditions contained in the recruitment advertisement. The instructions for submission of the online application, *inter alia*, is as follows:

“INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUBMISSION OF ON-LINE APPLICATION:

General Instructions	
1.	Read the instructions carefully before proceeding further.
2.	Before start of filling-up of application through on-line mode, the candidate should keep ready, the following details/documents: a) Valid Email ID & Mobile Number-For proper communication it is suggested to provide personal E-mail ID & Mobile No. b) Scanned copy of the recent passport size color photograph (not older than 3 Months) Candidates should ensure that the same photograph is used throughout this recruitment process. c) Scanned signature for uploading in the application.
3.	Category once filled by candidate in the on-line application form will not be changed.
How to Apply	
1.	Candidates should have a valid personal e-mail ID & Mobile No. and must ensure that it is active during the entire recruitment process. Application sequence number, User ID, Password and all other important communication will be sent on the same registered e-mail ID (please ensure that email sent to this mail box is not redirected to your junk/spam folder) & mobile no.
2.	Candidates should take utmost care in furnishing/providing the correct details while filling-up the on-line application. You can edit the information before submission of application. Once the Form is submitted, it cannot be edited.
3.	Application once submitted cannot be edited/withdrawn and fee once paid will neither be refunded nor adjusted.
4.	The process for submitting the application is given below:-
Step-I (Sign-Up)	
a.	The candidate should fill up all the desired information i.e. Post Applied, Candidate Name, Email id, Mobile number, etc. correctly.
b.	Sign-up by filling up Post Applied, Category, Candidate Name, Mobile Number and E-Mail ID. After clicking SUBMIT button/tab, the candidates will receive Application Sequence No (User ID) & Password on their registered E-mail ID during Signing. Now, candidate has to Click "Log Out" tab (given on top right corner) and re-log in for Step-II. On completion of Step-I, Sign-Up mail will be received in candidate's registered Email ID/mobile number confirming his signed-up along with the User ID (Application Sequence No.) and password.
Step-II (Filling-up of Application)	
a.	After signed-up, candidate has to Re-login and click on "Go to Application Form" icon at top right corner, select his/her category and other mandatory details and complete Personal Details, Qualification Details, Upload photo/signature and submission of Fee (wherein applicable) through Online mode via Debit card, Credit card or Internet Banking/UPI etc. through PayU.
b.	Instructions regarding scanning of Photograph and Signature: Candidates should upload the scanned (digital) image of their photograph and signature and other relevant documents in (jpg/jpeg/pdf) format, as per the process given below: (i) Photograph Image: • Please upload one recent passport size photograph with white background. • Size of the image should be min. 50 KB and max. 100 KB. • Image should be .jpg or .jpeg format. • Scanner dpi should be 200 dpi. • Dimension should be 3.5 cm x 4.5 cm. (ii) Signature image: The applicant has to sign on white paper with Black ink pen.



	The signature must be signed only by the applicant and not by any other person. Please scan the signature area only and not the entire page. Please upload your recent signature. min 50 KB max. 100 KB (only jpeg and jpg formats). (iii) Other relevant supporting Documents. • Please scan and upload relevant certificate (self-attested) in the online portal as per requirement (Size of files should be max. 1MB (only PDF, JPEGs and JPS formats). • SSLC/Matriculation Certificate as Date of Birth Proof. • Educational Qualification Certificate in respect of post applied for including mark sheet if any. • Community/Caste (SC/ST/ODG/NCL), EWS certificate (computerized format issued by the Authorized Government/ Municipal Authorities). • Domicile/Residence/Nativity Certificate (computerized format issued by the local Government/ Municipal Authorities). • Income and Asset Certificate issued by a Competent Authority (Not below the rank of Tensildar) in the format prescribed by Govt. of India for EWS candidates. • Driving License for Junior Assistant (Fire Service) (Valid Heavy Vehicle Driving License; OR Valid Medium Vehicle Driving License issued at least one year before the date of Advertisement OR Valid Light Motor Vehicle Driving License issued at least two years before the date of Advertisement). • In case of Ex-Servicemen, scanned copy of Discharge Certificate issued by the Competent Authority, ESM ID Card and Dependency Certificate in the prescribed proforma issued by Zila/Rajya Sahnik Board. • In case of PwBD candidate, Certificate of Disability in the prescribed format issued by Medical Board of Hospital State (Central Government under RPwD Act 2016). • In case of Widow/Divorced Women/Women Judicially separated, who are not re-married the candidate has to upload original Death Certificate of Husband/Certified copy of the Court Order conveying Divorce or Judicially Separation and Affidavit the candidate has not re-married at the time of Document Verification. • Experience Certificate in the concerned discipline by concerned Deptt. • NOC (No Objection Certificate) applicable to candidates working in Govt./PSU etc.) • AAI identity card for AAI employees (applicable for AAI staff) • In case of Ex-Army/Naval, certificate issued by the Competent Authority of Armed Forces. CLICK PREVIEW Button to view the details entered. Please ensure that all aspects of the application and photo/sign/other relevant documents are correct before submitting. Please note that you cannot Edit/Modify your application once you click SUBMIT Button.
c	Once the application is submitted, candidates automatically will be redirected to PayU gateway to deposit the fee through Debit Card/Credit Card/Net Banking etc.
d	Guidelines for remittance of fee are as under (if applicable). • Post submission, the candidate will be re-directed to PayU gateway to make the online payment of application fee. • Kindly verify the details and make the payment for application fee via the different payment modes. • After successful payment of application fee, candidate will be redirected to higher application form.
e	Technical queries/clarifications relating to the filling up of ON-LINE APPLICATION, please feel free to contact through Helpdesk tab integrated in the Application portal or Helpdesk Number : 02261306257 from 10.00 am to 05.00 pm on working days.

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14. **GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS :**

1. Only candidates who are Domicile of **Chandigarh, Delhi, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand** can apply for the above posts.
2. Before applying for the post, the candidates should ensure that he/she fulfils the eligibility and other norms mentioned in the advertisement. He / She may cross-check the information furnished in the application form before finally submitting the same as no correction would be possible later.
3. Candidates are advised to apply online much before the closing date of application mentioned in this advertisement and not to wait till the last date to avoid the possibility of disconnection/inability/failure to log on the AAI's website on account of heavy load on internet/website jam/disconnection.
4. AAI will not take any responsibility for the candidates not being able to submit their applications within the last date on account of the aforesaid reasons or for any other reason beyond the control of AAI.
5. The eligibility with respect to Age, Education Qualification and Experience etc. will be determined as on 05/03/2025.
6. Where CGPA/OGPA/DGPA/CPI etc. is awarded, the candidates will have to produce document indicating equivalent percentage of marks as per norms adopted by the Board/University/Institute at the time of documents verification.
7. Where a specialization is required in the qualifying degree in the



essential qualification, candidate is required to submit a certificate from the University/Institution clearly specifying the specialization in the qualifying degree.

8. The date of declaration of result/issuance of mark sheets shall be deemed to be the date of acquiring of qualification and there shall be no relaxation on this account.'

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23. During Documents Verification process, the candidate will have to produce Original Certificates including Experience certificate along with a proof of identity and one set of self-attested photocopies of all the Certificates. If the identity of the candidate is in doubt or he/she is not able to produce the requisite documents or there is mismatch of information in the documents, his/her candidature will be rejected. No additional time will be given for producing original documents.

24. Selection of candidates shall be provisional, subject to verification of documents relating to eligibility criteria, Character and Antecedents/background check, Domicile certificate, Caste certificate/ Other Backward Classes (Non-Creamy Layer Certificate)/ EWS Certificate, Experience Certificate, Valid Driving License, Apprenticeship Certificate issued by AAI (if any) and other documents as submitted by the candidate and is also subject to his/her meeting the requisite medical standards for the post and other requirements applicable for appointments under the rules of AAI.

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26. Candidature of the registered candidates is liable to be rejected at any stage of recruitment process or after recruitment or joining if any information provided by the candidate is found false or is not found in conformity with eligibility criteria mentioned in the advertisement. AAI may take legal action as deemed fit against such candidates."

5. The controversy turns on the recruitment conditions as notified. The advertisement and the online application instructions required candidates, before submitting the application, to keep scanned copies of “*other relevant supporting documents*” ready, which expressly included “*Domicile/Residence/Nativity Certificate (computerized format issued by the local Government/Municipal Authorities)*”. The “*General Instructions*” further restricted eligibility to candidates who are domiciles of specified States, including Delhi, and stated that eligibility with respect to age, educational qualification and allied criteria would be determined as on 5th March, 2025. Clauses governing verification also made it clear that selection



would remain provisional, subject to verification of eligibility documents including the domicile certificate, and that candidature could be rejected at any stage if the information or documents were not in conformity with the eligibility conditions.

6. On a plain reading of the instructions, domicile is not an incidental detail. It is a gateway eligibility condition for even entering the zone of consideration. Equally, the mode of proving that eligibility was also prescribed. The recruitment authority was entitled to insist that the domicile certificate be uploaded at the application stage, so that the candidature could be screened on a uniform and transparent basis and the verification stage could operate as a check on what was already disclosed and uploaded.

7. The Petitioner's case falters at this threshold. It is not disputed that the domicile certificate was not uploaded when the online application was submitted. In such a situation, the Petitioner cannot seek a writ that effectively rewrites the recruitment framework by permitting a mandatory document to be furnished for the first time at a later stage. Courts have consistently held that the terms of an advertisement and the governing recruitment conditions bind both the recruiting authority and the candidates, and cannot be altered mid-stream or relaxed for a single candidate, as that would be unfair to others who complied or were rejected for non-compliance. The jurisdiction under Article 226 is meant to correct illegality or manifest arbitrariness. It is not meant to create an exception that dilutes a notified requirement and, in the process, introduces inequality in the selection process.

8. The submission that the Petitioner is, in fact, a domicile of Delhi, and the certificate only recognises an existing status, does not answer the



difficulty. Recruitment processes do not proceed on broad factual assertions. They proceed on prescribed proofs furnished in the prescribed manner and at the prescribed stage, so that every candidate is measured by the same yardstick. If candidates were permitted to cure a foundational omission after the application window closes, it would erode certainty in recruitment and create a differential standard. The fact that the Petitioner was permitted to take the CBT does not assist him either, since participation is expressly provisional and subject to verification, and any inadvertent progression in a computer-driven process does not confer a vested right to insist upon continuation despite failure at verification.

9. The Petitioner also contends that the advertisement does not specifically mention that the domicile certificate must have been issued before 5th March, 2025. This contention is factually incorrect, as Clause 14.5 of the General Conditions stipulates that: “*The eligibility with respect to Age, Educational Qualification and Experience etc. will be determined as on 05/03/2025*”. However, even if that contention is assumed in the Petitioner’s favour, it does not cure the more fundamental defect that the certificate was not uploaded with the application at all. Once the recruitment conditions required uploading the domicile certificate at the application stage, the absence of that document was sufficient to render the Petitioner’s candidature liable to rejection.

10. In view of the above, no ground for interference is made out. The writ petition is dismissed, along with pending application(s), if any.

SANJEEV NARULA, J

FEBRUARY 5, 2026/hc