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

+ **W.P.(C) 7975/2026, CM APPL. 38280/2026**

ANKUR MEHLA

.....Petitioner

Through: Mr. Rakesh Kumar Gogia and
Ms. Isha Singh, Advocates.

versus

NATIONAL FERTILIZERS LIMITED & ORS.Respondents

Through: *Appearance not given.*

CORAM:

HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE SANJEEV NARULA

ORDER

29.05.2026

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1. The Petitioner joined National Fertilizers Limited [*NFL*] as a Management Trainee (Marketing) on 29th October, 2007, and was subsequently issued an appointment letter on 8th December, 2008. In due course, he came to serve as Manager (Marketing). On 18th September, 2023, a chargesheet memorandum was issued to the Petitioner and disciplinary proceedings were initiated against him. During the pendency of the said proceedings, the Petitioner tendered his resignation on 14th March, 2024, seeking to be relieved with effect from 7th June, 2024.
2. The resignation, however, was not accepted. This decision was communicated to the Petitioner on 10th June, 2024. Thereafter, *vide* memoranda dated 28th June, 2024 and 5th July, 2024, the Petitioner was directed to report back for duty.
3. Subsequently, a Show Cause Notice [*SCN*] *vide* memorandum



dated 23rd August, 2024 was issued to the Petitioner, which led to the disciplinary proceedings culminating in an order dated 14th November, 2025 passed by the Disciplinary Authority, imposing the penalty of termination from service.

4. Aggrieved thereby, the Petitioner preferred an appeal. The Appellate Authority, by order dated 9th March, 2026, affirmed the decision of the Disciplinary Authority in the following terms:

"No. NFL/CO/HR/DP/2026/88

Dated:09.03.2026

ORDER

1. *This has reference to the appeal dated 10.12.2025 of Shri Ankur Mehla, Ex- Deputy Manager (Marketing), Emp.No.11688, submitted to the Appellate Authority i.e. Board of Directors against the order of major penalty of "termination from the services of the Company imposed upon him by the Disciplinary Authority vide order dated 14.11.2025.*

2. *The Appellate Authority perused the documents, Inquiry Report, decision of the Disciplinary Authority and appeal dated 10.12.2025 of Shri Ankur Mehla.*

3. *After deliberation, the Appellate Authority examined the submissions of Shri Ankur Mehla in his appeal and other records relevant to the matter and upheld the decision of Disciplinary Authority.*

Shri Ankur Mehla is advised to acknowledge the receipt of this communication.

*(Ashok Srivastava)
DGM (HR-Pers.)"*

5. The Petitioner's limited submission at this stage is that the Appellate Authority has rejected the appeal without assigning any reasons and without dealing with the grounds specifically urged therein.

6. The Court has heard counsel for the parties on the aforesaid issue. In the opinion of the Court, no submission advanced on behalf of the Respondents can justify the impugned order dated 9th March, 2026 passed by the Appellate Authority. A plain reading of the order shows that it merely



records that the Appellate Authority perused the documents, considered the Inquiry Report and examined the submissions made by the Petitioner. However, the order does not disclose any independent reasoning, nor does it deal with any of the grounds raised in the appeal.

7. In *S.N. Mukherjee v. Union of India*¹, the Supreme Court held that, except where the requirement is dispensed with expressly or by necessary implication, an authority exercising quasi-judicial functions is required to record reasons for its decision. The recording of reasons ensures that the authority has given due consideration to the points in controversy, introduces clarity in the decision-making process, and minimises arbitrariness. The reasons may be brief, but they must be clear and explicit so as to indicate that the authority has applied its mind to the issues before it.

8. The principle assumes particular significance in disciplinary appeals. In *R.P. Bhatt v. Union of India*², while construing Rule 27(2) of the CCS (CCA) Rules, the Supreme Court held that the requirement of consideration of an appeal implies due application of mind to the matters raised therein. The Court further observed that even where the appellate authority is not obliged to record elaborate reasons, the order must indicate that it has examined whether the findings recorded by the disciplinary authority are warranted by the evidence on record and whether the penalty imposed is justified.

9. Similar principles were reiterated in *Narinder Mohan Arya v. United India Insurance Co. Ltd.*³, wherein the Supreme Court held that although an appellate order affirming the disciplinary authority need not necessarily be

¹ (1990) 4 SCC 594.

² (1986) 2 SCC 651.



elaborate, it must nevertheless disclose due application of mind to the contentions raised in the appeal. Where serious grounds are urged by the delinquent employee, the appellate authority is required to assign reasons indicating that such contentions have been duly considered.

10. Tested on these principles, the impugned order cannot be sustained. It merely records that the documents, Inquiry Report and submissions of the Petitioner were considered, but does not disclose what was considered, whether the grounds urged in appeal were examined, or how the conclusions were arrived at. The order, therefore, falls short of the requirement of a reasoned appellate determination demonstrating due application of mind. Accordingly, without expressing any opinion on the merits of the disciplinary proceedings or the findings recorded by the Disciplinary Authority, the impugned order dated 9th March, 2026 is set aside.

11. The matter is remanded to the Appellate Authority for a fresh consideration of the Petitioner's appeal dated 10th December, 2025. A fresh decision shall be rendered as expeditiously as possible and preferably within a period of three months from today. The Appellate Authority shall pass a reasoned and speaking order dealing with the contentions raised by the Petitioner.

12. All rights and contentions of the parties are kept open.

13. In the event the Petitioner remains aggrieved by the decision so rendered, he shall be at liberty to avail of such remedies as may be available to him in accordance with law.

14. It is clarified that this Court has not examined the merits of the findings recorded by the Disciplinary Authority.

³ (2006) 4 SCC 713.



15. In the above terms, the petition is disposed of along with the pending application.

SANJEEV NARULA, J

MAY 29, 2026

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