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WP-30609-2026

IN THE HIGH COURT OF MADHYA PRADESH
AT JABALPUR

BEFORE

HON'BLE SHRI JUSTICE VIVEK RUSIA,
ACTING CHIEF JUSTICE

&

HON'BLE SHRI JUSTICE PRADEEP MITTAL

ON THE 3rd OF AUGUST, 2026WRIT PETITION No. 30609 of 2026*M/S CMT MECHANISED SYSTEM PVT LTD**Versus**UNION OF INDIA AND OTHERS*

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Appearance:

*Shri Arpan Pawar - Senior Advocate with Shri Shubhank Kumar Saraf
and Shri Dev Sharma - Advocates for the petitioner.*

*Shri Suyash Mohan Guru - Dy. Solicitor General for the
respondents/Union of India.*

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ORDER

Per. Vivek Rusia, Acting Chief Justice

The petitioner has filed the present petition challenging the order dated 25.07.2026, whereby the contract agreement dated 09.03.2026 executed for "Upgradation of Toilets in LHB Coaches at CRWS, Bhopal" has been rescinded in terms of Clause 62 of the General Conditions of Contract. Simultaneously, the petitioner individual or a partnership firm/JV has been debarred from participation in tender for execution of the balance work with forfeiture of performance guarantee. By way of this petition, the petitioner is also seeking direction to the respondents to restore and allow continuation of



the contract to complete the balance work in terms of the contract. The petitioner is also seeking mandamus to the respondents not to create any third party rights or awarding the balance work to any third agency.

2. The petitioner is a Private Limited Company engaged in the business of coach Interior and other alleged works with the Indian Railways from last several years. The respondents floated/published a tender dated 06.06.2025 bearing No.WCR-CRWS-TOILET-UPG-25-09 for the work under the name and style of "Upgradation of Toilets in LHB Coaches at CRWS, Bhopal". The petitioner participated in the aforesaid tender process and declared LOA.

3. The Letter of Acceptance dated 20.08.2025 was issued in order to award the work to the petitioner for an amount of Rs.13,30,84,770/-. The petitioner furnished the Bank Guarantee to the tune of Rs.66,54,240/-. The work was to be completed within 12 months. the LOA specifically provides as under:-

"The entire work shall be completed within 12 month from the date of issue of Letter of Acceptance. Here Completion period is to be counted, as per clause 19.2 of tender document, after thirty days (30 days) from the date of issue of acceptance letter, or when the contractor states in writing that he is ready to start the work, whichever is earlier."

4. As per the contract, the petitioner was required to upgrade the 150 toilets. According to the petitioner, owing to the prevailing war situation and the consequent disruption in global supply chain, the petitioner was unable to procure the requisite material necessary for execution of the work. Since it was beyond the control of the petitioner, the respondents ought to have not insisted for completion of the work within a year from the date of issuance of



LOA.

5. The petitioner's request for extension of time without imposing liquidated damage was also turned down by the respondents. The respondents issued a 7-day notice on 16.06.2026 invoking Clause 62 of the General Conditions of Contract. Due to the slow progress of work, the petitioner submitted a reply to the said notice. Thereafter, the respondents issued 48 hour notice dated 03.07.2026 as per Clause 74 of Special Conditions of Contract.

6. Again, the petitioner submitted a reply that 08 coaches had already been successfully completed and one additional coach is about to complete within a few days. According to the petitioner, the material required for five additional coaches has already been procured and requested for extension of 12-15 days. The respondents have cancelled the contract, vide impugned order 25.07.2026. Hence, the petitioner has filed the present petition.

7. We have heard Senior counsel at length.

8. So far as the validity of termination notice is concerned, the same cannot be examined in writ petition as there is an arbitration clause in the Standard General Conditions of Contract, GCC, April, 2022. Clauses 63 and 64 are reproduced below:-

63. Conciliation of Disputes:

(i) This clause is applicable in the tender having advertised value less than or equal to Rs 50 Crore.

(ii) All disputes and differences of any kind whatsoever arising out of or in connection with the contract, whether during the progress of the work or after its completion and whether before or after the determination of the contract, shall be referred by the Contractor



to the "Chief Engineer" or "Divisional Railway Manager" through "Notice of Dispute" provided that no such notice shall be served later than 30 days after the date of issue of Completion Certificate by the Engineer. Chief Engineer or Divisional Railway Manager shall, within 30 days after receipt of the Contractor's "Notice of Dispute", notify the name of conciliator(s) to the Contractor.

(iii) The Conciliator(s) shall assist the parties to reach an amicable settlement in an independent and impartial manner within the terms of contract.

(iv) If the parties reach agreement on a settlement of the dispute, they shall draw up and sign a written settlement agreement duly signed by Engineer In-charge, Contractor and conciliator(s). When the parties sign the settlement agreement, it shall be final and binding on the parties.

(v) The parties shall not initiate, during the conciliation proceedings, any arbitral or judicial proceedings in respect of a dispute that is the subject matter of the conciliation proceedings.

(vi) The conciliation proceedings shall be terminated as per Section 76 of 'The Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996.

63.1 Matters Finally Determined by the Railway: *All disputes and differences of any kind whatsoever arising out of or in connection with the contract, whether during the progress of the work or after its completion and whether before or after the determination of the contract, shall be referred by the Contractor to the GM and the GM shall, within 120 days after receipt of the Contractor's representation, make and notify decisions on all matters referred to by the Contractor in writing provided that matters for which provision has been made in Clauses 7(j), 8, 18, 22(5), 39.1, 39.2, 40A, 43(2), 45(i)(a), 55, 55-A(5), 57, 57A, 61(1), 61(2), 62(1), 63(iv) and 63.2.11 of the Standard General Conditions of Contract or in any Clause (stated as excepted matter) of the Special Conditions of the Contract, shall be deemed as 'excepted matters' (matters not arbitrable) and decisions of the Railway authority,*



thereon shall be final and binding on the Contractor: provided further that 'excepted matters' shall stand specifically excluded from the purview of the Dispute Adjudication Board (DAB) and Arbitration.

63.2 Dispute Adjudication Board (DAB): *This clause is applicable in the tender having advertised value more than Rs 50 Crore.*

63.2.1 *Any dispute/s if not settled with the Engineer, shall be referred to DAB.*

The DAB shall consist of a panel of three Retired Railway Officers, retired not below senior administrative grade (SAG). The DAB shall be formed within 90 days of signing of Contract Agreement. For this purpose, a panel of DAB members shall be maintained in the General Manager's office. The complete panel, which shall not be less than five members, shall be sent by Chief Engineer to the Contractor to nominate one member of the DAB from the panel as Contractor's nominee within two weeks of receipt of the panel. On receipt of Contractor's nominee, the Chief Engineer shall nominate one member from the same panel as Railway nominee for the DAB. Both above nominees shall jointly select presiding member of the DAB from the same panel.

63.2.2 *The appointment of DAB shall be effectuated by way of a tri-partite agreement among the Railway, Contractor and the respective DAB members. The terms of the remuneration of each member shall be as fixed by Ministry of Railways from time to time. Each party shall be responsible for paying one-half of this remuneration.*

63.2.3 *If one or more of the members appointed refuses to act as DAB member, or is unable or unwilling to perform his functions as DAB member for any reason whatsoever or dies or in the opinion of the Chief Engineer fails to act without undue delay, the parties shall terminate the mandate of such DAB member and thereupon new DAB member shall be appointed in the same manner, as the outgoing DAB member had been appointed.*



63.2.4 The appointment of any member may be terminated by mutual agreement of both Parties, but not by the Railway or the Contractor acting alone. Unless otherwise agreed by both the Parties, the appointment of the DAB (including each member) shall expire upon expiry of this Contract Agreement.

63.2.5 Before start of DAB proceedings, each DAB member shall give the following certificate to the Railway and the Contractor:

"I have no any past or present relationship in relation to the subject matter in dispute, whether financial, business, professional or other kind. Further, I have no any past or present relationship with or interest in any of the parties whether financial, business, professional or other kind, which is likely to give rise to justifiable doubts as to my independence or impartiality."

63.2.6 DAB proceedings shall be conducted as decided by the DAB. The DAB shall give its decision within 90 days of a Dispute referred to it by any of the Parties, duly recording the reasons before arriving at the decision. The DAB shall decide the issue within terms and conditions of the contract. This time limit shall be extendable subject to the Parties mutual agreement.

63.2.7 The DAB decision shall not be binding on both the Parties. In case any party is not satisfied by the decision of DAB, then the aggrieved party may approach Arbitral Tribunal for arbitration proceedings.

63.2.8 No dispute shall be referred to Arbitral Tribunal unless the same has been referred to DAB for adjudication. However, in case DAB is not formed due to any reason, the disputes can be directly referred to Arbitral Tribunal to adjudicate the dispute.

63.2.9 In the specific cases of any misconduct by any of the members of the DAB, the parties shall have the right to specifically bring it to the notice of the DAB such conduct, through a statement filed with necessary documents in proof of such misconduct and the DAB, after taking NOTICE of such conduct initiate the replacement of the member concerned, in the



same manner the member to be replaced was appointed.

63.2.10 Once the decision is given by DAB, DAB cannot review the decision at its own or on the request of one party, unless both parties agree for review of decision by DAB.

63.2.11 In case DAB decision is not challenged by either party within 180 days of receipt of decision of DAB, the decision shall be considered as final and parties would be barred for referring the same to Arbitral Tribunal for adjudication.

63.2.12 The obligation of the Railway and the Contactor shall not be altered by reasons of issue being or under reference to DAB.

63.2.13 The DAB shall conduct the proceedings at any convenient venue which shall be decided by DAB in consultations with parties.

63.2.14 It is a term of this contract that the Parties shall not approach any Court of Law for settlement of such disputes or differences unless an attempt has first been made by the parties to settle such disputes or differences through DAB and Arbitral Tribunal.

64.(1): Demand for Arbitration:

64.(1)(i): In the event of any dispute or difference between the parties hereto as to the construction or operation of this contract, or the respective rights and liabilities of the parties on any matter in question, dispute or difference on any account or as to the withholding by the Railway of any certificate to which the Contractor may claim to be entitled to, or if the Railway fails to make a decision within 120 days, then and in any such case, but except in any of the "excepted matters" referred to in Clause 63.1 of these Conditions, the Contractor, after 120 days but within 180 days of his presenting his final claim on disputed matters shall demand in writing that the dispute or difference be referred to arbitration.

64.(1)(ii)(a): The demand for arbitration shall specify the matters which are in question, or subject of the dispute or difference as



also the amount of claim item-wise. Only such dispute or difference, in respect of which the demand has been made, together with counter claims or set off, given by the Railway, shall be referred to arbitration and other matters shall not be included in the reference.

64.(1)(ii)(b): The parties may waive off the applicability of Sub-Section 12(5) of Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Act 2015, if they agree for such waiver in writing, after dispute having arisen between them, in the format given under Annexure XV of these conditions.

64.(1)(iii)(a): The Arbitration proceedings shall be assumed to have commenced from the day, a written and valid demand for arbitration is received by the Railway.

64.(1)(iii)(b): The claimant shall submit his claims stating the facts supporting the claims alongwith all the relevant documents and the relief or remedy sought against each claim within a period of 30 days from the date of appointment of the Arbitral Tribunal.

64.(1)(iii)(c): The Railway shall submit its defence statement and counter claim(s), if any, within a period of 60 days of receipt of copy of claims from Tribunal, unless otherwise extension has been granted by Tribunal.

64.(1)(iii)(d): Place of Arbitration: The place of arbitration would be within the geographical limits of the Division of the Railway where the cause of action arose or the Headquarters of the concerned Railway or any other place with the written consent of both the parties.

64.(1)(iv): No new claim shall be added during proceedings by either party. However, a party may amend or supplement the original claim or defense thereof during the course of arbitration proceedings subject to acceptance by Tribunal having due regard to the delay in making it.

64.(1)(v): If the Contractor(s) does/do not prefer his/their specific and final claims in writing, within a period of 90 days of receiving



the intimation from the Railways that the final bill is ready for payment, he/they will be deemed to have waived his/their claim(s) and the Railway shall be discharged and released of all liabilities under the contract in respect of these claims.

64.(2): Obligation During Pendency of Arbitration: *Work under the contract shall, unless otherwise directed by the Engineer, continue during the arbitration proceedings, and no payment due or payable by the Railway shall be withheld on account of such proceedings, provided, however, it shall be open for Arbitral Tribunal to consider and decide whether or not such work should continue during arbitration proceedings.*

64.(3): Appointment of Arbitrator:

64.(3)(a): Appointment of Arbitrator where applicability of section 12 (5) of Arbitration and Conciliation Act has been waived off:

64.(3)(a)(i): *In cases where the total value of all claims in question added together does not exceed 1,00,00,000/- (Rupees One Crore), the Arbitral Tribunal shall consist of a Sole Arbitrator who shall be a Gazetted Officer of Railway not below Junior Administrative Grade, nominated by the General Manager. The sole arbitrator shall be appointed within 60 days from the day when a written and valid demand for arbitration is received by General Manager.*

64.(3)(a)(ii): *In cases not covered by the Clause 64(3)(a)(i), the Arbitral Tribunal shall consist of a panel of three Gazetted Railway Officers not below Junior Administrative Grade or 2 Railway Gazetted Officers not below Junior Administrative Grade and a retired Railway Officer, retired not below the rank of Senior Administrative Grade Officer, as the arbitrators. For this purpose, the Railway will send a panel of at least four (4) names of Gazetted Railway Officers of one or more departments of the Railway which may also include the name(s) of retired Railway Officer(s) empanelled to work as Railway Arbitrator to the Contractor within 60 days from the day when a written and valid*



demand for arbitration is received by the General Manager.

Contractor will be asked to suggest to General Manager at least 2 names out of the panel for appointment as Contractor's nominee within 30 days from the date of dispatch of the request by Railway. The General Manager shall appoint at least one out of them as the Contractor's nominee and will, also simultaneously appoint the balance number of arbitrators either from the panel or from outside the panel, duly indicating the 'presiding arbitrator' from amongst the 3 arbitrators so appointed. General Manager shall complete this exercise of appointing the Arbitral Tribunal within 30 days from the receipt of the names of Contractor's nominees. While nominating the arbitrators, it will be necessary to ensure that one of them is from the Accounts Department. An officer of Selection Grade of the Accounts Department shall be considered of equal status to the officers in Senior Administrative Grade of other departments of the Railway for the purpose of appointment of arbitrator.

64.3.(a).iii: *The serving railway officer working in arbitral tribunal in the ongoing arbitration cases as per clause 64.(3)(a)(i) and clause 64.(3)(a)(ii) above, can continue as arbitrator in the tribunal even after his retirement.*

64.(3)(b): *Appointment of Arbitrator where applicability of Section 12 (5) of Arbitration and Conciliation Act has not been waived off:*

(i) In cases where the total value of all claims in question added together does not exceed 50,00,000/- (Rupees Fifty Lakh), the Arbitral Tribunal shall consist of a Retired Railway Officer. retired not below the rank of Senior Administrative Grade Officer, as the arbitrator. For this purpose, the Railway will send a panel of at least four (4) names of retired Railway Officer(s) empanelled to work as Railway Arbitrator duly indicating their retirement dates to the Contractor within 60 days from the day when a written and valid demand for arbitration is received by the General Manager.



Contractor will be asked to suggest to General Manager at least 2 names out of the panel for appointment as arbitrator within 30 days from the date of dispatch of the request by Railway. The General Manager shall appoint at least one out of them as the arbitrator within 30 days from the receipt of the names of Contractor's nominees.

(ii) In cases where the total value of all claims in question added together exceed ₹ 50,00,000/- (Rupees Fifty Lakh), the Arbitral Tribunal shall consist of a Panel of three (3) retired Railway Officer, retired not below the rank of Senior Administrative Grade Officer, as the arbitrators. For this purpose, the Railway will send a panel of at least four (4) names of retired Railway Officer(s) empanelled to work as Railway Arbitrator duly indicating their retirement date to the Contractor within 60 days from the day when a written and valid demand for arbitration is received by the General Manager.

Contractor will be asked to suggest to General Manager at least 2 names out of the panel for appointment as Contractor's nominee within 30 days from the date of dispatch of the request by Railway. The General Manager shall appoint at least one out of them as the Contractor's nominee and will, also simultaneously appoint the balance number of arbitrators either from the panel or from outside the panel, duly indicating the 'Presiding Arbitrator from amongst the 3 arbitrators so appointed. General Manager shall complete this exercise of appointing the Arbitral Tribunal within 30 days from the receipt of the names of Contractor's nominees. While nominating the arbitrators, it will be necessary to ensure that one of them has served in the Accounts Department.

64.(3)(c)(i): If one or more of the arbitrators appointed as above refuses to act as arbitrator. withdraws from his office as arbitrator, or vacates his/their office/offices or is/are unable or unwilling to perform his functions as arbitrator for any reason whatsoever or dies or in the opinion of the General Manager fails to act without



undue delay, the General Manager shall appoint new arbitrator/arbitrators to act in his/their place in the same manner in which the earlier arbitrator/arbitrators had been appointed. Such re-constituted Tribunal may, at its discretion, proceed with the reference from the stage at which it was left by the previous arbitrator (s).

64.(3)(c)(ii): *(a) The Arbitral Tribunal shall have power to call for such evidence by way of affidavits or otherwise as the Arbitral Tribunal shall think proper, and it shall be the duty of the parties hereto to do or cause to be done all such things as may be necessary to enable the Arbitral Tribunal to make the award without any delay. The proceedings shall normally be conducted on the basis of documents and written statements.*

(b) Before proceeding into the merits of any dispute, the Arbitral Tribunal shall first decide and pass its orders over any plea submitted/objections raised by any party, if any, regarding appointment of Arbitral Tribunal, validity of arbitration agreement, jurisdiction and scope of the Tribunal to deal with the dispute (s) submitted to arbitration, applicability of time 'limitation' to any dispute, any violation of agreed procedure regarding conduct of the arbitral proceedings or plea for interim measures of protection and record its orders in day to day proceedings. A copy of the proceedings duly signed by all the members of tribunal should be provided to both the parties.

64.3(c)(iii): *(i) Qualification of Arbitrator (s):*

(a) Serving Gazetted Railway Officers of not below JA Grade level.

(b) Retired Railway Officers not below SA Grade level, one year after his date of retirement.

(c) Age of arbitrator at the time of appointment shall be below 70 years.

(ii) An arbitrator may be appointed notwithstanding the total number of arbitration cases in which he has been appointed in the



past.

(iii) While appointing arbitrator(s) under Sub-Clause 64.(3)(a)(i), 64.(3)(a)(ii), 64.(3)(b)(i) & 64.(3)(b)(ii) above, due care shall be taken that he/they is/are not the one/those who had an opportunity to deal with the matters to which the contract relates or who in the course of his/their duties as Railway servant(s) expressed views on all or any of the matters under dispute or differences. A certification to this effect as per annexure- XVI shall be taken from Arbitrators also. The proceedings of the Arbitral tribunal or the award made by such Tribunal will, however, not be invalid merely for the reason that one or more arbitrator had, in the course of his service, opportunity to deal with the matters to which the contract relates or who in the course of his/their duties expressed views on all or any of the matters under dispute.

64.(3)(d)(i): The arbitral award shall state item wise, the sum and reasons upon which it is based. The analysis and reasons shall be detailed enough so that the award could be inferred therefrom.

64.(3)(d)(ii): A party may apply for corrections of any computational errors, any typographical or clerical errors or any other error of similar nature occurring in the award of a Tribunal and interpretation of a specific point of award to Tribunal within 60 days of receipt of the award.

64.(3)(d)(iii): A party may apply to Tribunal within 60 days of receipt of award to make an additional award as to claims presented in the arbitral proceedings but omitted from the arbitral award.

64.(4): In case of the Tribunal, comprising of three members, any ruling on award shall be made by a majority of members of Tribunal. In the absence of such a majority, the views of the Presiding Arbitrator shall prevail.

64.(5): Where the arbitral award is for the payment of money, no interest shall be payable on whole or any part of the money for any period till the date on which the award is made.



64. (6): The cost of arbitration shall be borne by the respective parties. The cost shall inter-alia include fee of the arbitrator(s), as per the rates fixed by Railway Board from time to time and the fee shall be borne equally by both the parties, provided parties sign an agreement in the format given at Annexure XV to these conditions after/ while referring these disputes to Arbitration. Further, the fee payable to the arbitrator(s) would be governed by the instructions issued on the subject by Railway Board from time to time irrespective of the fact whether the arbitrator(s) is/are appointed by the Railway Administration or by the court of law unless specifically directed by Hon'ble court otherwise on the matter.

64.(7) Subject to the provisions of the aforesaid Arbitration and Conciliation Act 1996 and the rules thereunder and relevant para of the Standard General Conditions of Contract and any statutory modifications thereof shall apply to the appointment of arbitrators and arbitration proceedings under this Clause.

64.(8) In case arbitration award is challenged by a party in the Court of Law, 75% of award amount, pending adjudication by Court of Law, shall be made by party to other party. In case payment is to be made by Railway to Contractor, the terms & conditions as incorporated in the Ministry of Railways letter No. 2016/CE(I)/CT/ARB/3(NITI Aayog)/Pt. dated 08th Mar, 2017 as amended from time to time, shall be followed. In case Contractor has to pay to the Railway, then 75% of the award amount shall be deducted by the Railway from the Contractor's bills, Performance Guarantee/ Security Deposit or any other dues of Contractor with the Government of India.

9. The petitioner in all terms should have disclosed in Para-3 of the writ petition. There is a wrong declaration that the petitioner has availed all the statutory and other remedies. The petitioner has only filed a representation, which cannot be said to be a statutory and an alternate



remedy.

10. So far as the blacklisting is concerned, the petitioner has only been debarred from participation in tender for executing the balance work only. So far as the interim relief in respect of forfeiture of security deposit and performance guarantee, the petitioner may invoke Section 9 of the Arbitration and Conciliation Act. Accordingly, this writ petition is **dismissed**.

(VIVEK RUSIA)
ACTING CHIEF JUSTICE

(PRADEEP MITTAL)
JUDGE

Shruti