



2025:DHC:4172



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

Decided on 20.05.2025

+ W.P.(C) 642/2019 & CM APPL. 2941/2019

CHANDRA PRAKASH

.....Petitioner

Through: Mr. Ankur Chhibber & Mr.
Anshuman Mehrotra, Advocates.

versus

AIRPORTS AUTHORITY OF INDIA AND ORS.Respondents

Through: Mr. Vaibhav Kalra and Ms. Neha
Bhatnagar, Advocates.

CORAM:

HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE PRATEEK JALAN

PRATEEK JALAN, J (ORAL)

1. The petitioner has filed this petition under Article 226 of the Constitution, relating to recruitment by the respondent – Airports Authority of India [“AAI”] for the post of Junior Assistant (Fire Services), AAI, pursuant to an advertisement issued in August 2017.
2. AAI issued the advertisement in question for recruitment to 84 vacancies for the post of Junior Assistant (Fire Services) - NE-04 level, of which four were reserved for Scheduled Tribe [“ST”] candidates.
3. The selection procedure consisted of the following five stages:
“4. SELECTION PROCEDURE:
The selection process will consist of following stages:
 1. Online computer based examination;
 2. Certificates/documents verification;
 3. Medical fitness /physical measurement test;



4. *Driving Test; and*

5. *Physical Endurance Test*

The candidate who does not fulfil the eligibility criteria at any stage mentioned above will not be considered for next stage of selection process and therefore, will be disqualified from further selection process.

Appointment to the post of Junior Assistant(FS) is subject to fulfilling eligibility conditions and successful passing 18 week of Basic Training Course in which 2 weeks training should be exclusively meant for imparting training on maintenance and driving on Heavy Duty Vehicle from AIRPORTS AUTHORITY OF INDIA Training Institutes. During training, incumbent is entitled for stipend as per the rules, AIRPORTS AUTHORITY OF INDIA will not be responsible for any injury caused during the course of selection process.”

4. The method of selection thus included a written examination and a physical endurance test. The written examination was of 100 marks, with 50 marks as the minimum qualifying marks for General and Other Backward Classes candidates, and 40 marks for Scheduled Caste and ST candidates. The petitioner was a candidate in the ST category.

5. The dispute in the present case concerns points awarded to the petitioner in the physical endurance test.

6. The physical efficiency test for male candidates, as prescribed in the advertisement, was conducted in five parameters. Marks were awarded for each parameter depending upon benchmarks set forth in the following table:



“b) Physical Efficiency Test for Male candidates

Item →	100 m	Rope Climbing	Pole	60 m	Full
Marks ↓	running (In	(Total timing	Climbing	running	ladder
	sec)	20 sec)(8	(Total timing	with human	climbing
		meters)	30 sec) (8	dummy (50	(in sec)
			meters)	kgs) (in sec)	
20	11	Full height	Full height	20	35
18	12	---	---	---	45
16	13	3/4 height	3/4 height	30	60
14	14	---	---	---	75
12	15	2/3 height	2/3 height	40	90
10	---	1/2 height	1/2 height	---	100
8	---	1/3 height	1/3 height	---	110
6	---	---	---	---	120

Note

- 100 Meters running is required to be completed in 15 seconds, failing which they will be disqualified.
- Total height of Rope and Pole shall be after adding 2 meters. Example: for male 2+6=8 meters:
- Ladder to be pitched at the height of 6 meters from ground level.”

7. The petitioner was awarded a total of 80 marks in the physical endurance test, divided as follows:

- A. 100 m running - 15 marks out of a maximum of 20 marks
B. Rope climbing - 20 marks out of a maximum of 20 marks
C. Pole climbing - 6 marks out of a maximum of 20 marks
D. Casualty carrying - 20 marks out of a maximum of 20 marks
E. Ladder climbing - 19 marks out of a maximum of 20 marks

Total - 80 marks

8. The petitioner’s total score awarded in the physical endurance test, added to the petitioner’s marks in the written test, which was 54 marks,



resulted in a cumulative score of 134. He was not selected, as the last selected candidate in the ST category secured 135 marks.

9. The petitioner first challenged AAI's decision in W.P.(C) 12597/2018. The writ petition was disposed of on 27.11.2018, noting that the petitioner seeks directions for the grant of correct marks as per the chart/table given in the advertisement, and for his appointment, if he has scored higher marks than the last appointed ST candidate. The Court directed the respondents to consider the petitioner's representation dated 15.10.2018, and take a reasoned decision.

10. By order dated 19.12.2018, the petitioner's contention has been rejected, which has given rise to this writ petition.

11. I have heard Mr. Anshuman Mehrotra, learned counsel for the petitioner, and Mr. Vaibhav Kalra, learned counsel for the respondents.

12. The arguments advanced by Mr. Mehrotra center on two elements of the physical endurance test:

- a) **100 m running:** As far as 100 m running is concerned, the petitioner completed the task in 13.45 seconds and was awarded 15 points. It is the petitioner's contention that the table shows that a candidate who completed 100 m running in 13 seconds would be awarded 16 points, and one who completed it in 14 seconds would be awarded 14 points. He, therefore, submits that there was no provision for the award of 15 points at all, and the petitioner, having completed the task in less than 14 seconds, was entitled to 16 points.
- b) **Pole Climbing:** The argument, with regard to Pole Climbing, is similar. The pole was admittedly 8 meters in height. In the



impugned order dated 19.12.2018, it has been explained that the height requirements were calculated after adjusting for the first two meters, as stipulated in the Note below the table. The chart stipulated that 8 points would be awarded to candidates who complete $1/3^{\text{rd}}$ of the height, 10 points for $1/2$ the height, 12 points for $2/3^{\text{rd}}$ of the height, etc. Thus, 8 points were to be awarded for 4 m (2+2 m), 10 points were to be awarded for 5 m (2 +3 m), etc. The petitioner's contention is that 8 points were the minimum to be awarded in terms of the table, regardless of the height the candidate was actually able to climb, and the petitioner has wrongly been awarded only 6 points.

13. Having heard learned counsel for the parties, I am of the view that the petitioner's argument is based on a misinterpretation of the benchmarks given in the chart. The petitioner is right in saying that the marks that have been awarded to him for the two tests in question are not expressly provided in the chart, but the error, if any, was to his advantage.

14. As far as the 100-meter running test is concerned, the petitioner would have been entitled to 16 points if he completed the test in 13 seconds. He admittedly did not complete the test in 13 seconds, but took a fraction of a second longer, having clocked in at 13.45 seconds. On a plain reading of the chart, he thus falls in the next category and was entitled only to 14 points. He has instead been awarded 15 points, giving him credit for the fact that he completed the task in less than 13.5 seconds, i.e., he was closer to 13 seconds than he was to 14 seconds. If this constitutes a departure from the stipulations of the advertisement, that departure was to the petitioner's advantage.



15. Similarly, in the case of Pole Climbing, the benchmarks for award of various points are evidently minimum benchmarks, i.e., 8 points were to be awarded to someone who attained 1/3rd of the height [2 + 2 meters], 10 marks to a person who attained 1/2 the height [2 + 3 meters], and so on. In the impugned order, the award of 6 marks for this particular test, despite no such provision having been made in the table, has been explained thus:

“In Pole climbing physical Test, the complainant has been awarded 6 marks out of 20. It is again clarified that the total height of pole to be climbed for male candidate was 8 mtrs (2+6) out of which 2 mtrs from the ground was exempted to start the climbing. As per the given chart, the marks for pole climbing exercise has been indicated to be given at Full height (6 mtrs), 3/4 height (4.5 mtrs.), 2/3 height (4.00 mtrs.), 1/2 height (3 mtrs) and 1/3 height (2 mtrs), but some of the candidates who have climbed the pole in between the indicated heights with more than 50% of intermittent distance have been awarded two marks, e.g. if a candidate reaches the height upto 5.25 mtrs in a given time the same has been awarded 18 marks out of 20. Similarly, if a candidate climbs the height one mtr. and above initially (three mtrs from ground) leaving two mtrs initially for the exempted height is awarded 6 marks.”

16. The petitioner was awarded 6 points because he crossed the intermediate height of 3 meters, of which 2 meters fell within the exemption in the Note. Mr. Mehrotra urges that the table does not provide for the award of 6 points at all, but the consequence would be that the petitioner would have earned no points at all, as he did not meet the 1/3rd height benchmark. The provision of 8 points for 1/3rd of the height cannot, in my view, be read as a minimum which every candidate must be awarded, regardless of the performance in the test. Benchmarks were set, and the respondents were duty-bound to follow them.

17. As a result, I am of the view that departure from the said benchmarks, if any, has only resulted in the petitioner being awarded



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more points than he should have been awarded. Resultantly, there is no merit in the claim asserted by the petitioner.

18. The writ petition is, therefore, dismissed, but with no order as to costs.

19. Pending application also stands dismissed.

MAY 20, 2025
SS/JM/

PRATEEK JALAN, J