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Rs. 100 ONE HUNDRED RUPEES

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BEFORE THIT, MISHIRIJHA, B.Sc., M.L. SOLE ARBITRATOR, AT CHENNAI 16th February 2025

COMPLAINT INDRP Case No. 1899

IN THE MATTER OF AN ARBITRATION DISPUTE RELATING TO THE DOMAIN NAME < https://protivitigroups.in/> UNDER THE IN DOMAIN NAME DISPUTE RESOLUTION POLICY;

PROTIVITI INC. 2884 Sand Hill Road, Suite 200 Menlo Park, CA 94025

Versus

Protiviti Fd Indra chuk, Pune-2473 Maharashtra

...Respondent

M.SHIRIJHA B.SC., M.L. STS Law Associates 2/669A, River View Enclave, First Main Road, Manapakkam, Chennai - 600 125.

AWARD PASSED UNDER THE INDRP RULES OF PROCEDURE

AND THE ARBITRATION AND CONCILIATION ACT, 1996

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I. PARTIES TO THE ARBITRATION

- 1. The Complainant is PROTIVITI INC., a Company incorporated under the laws of USA, having its office at 2884 Sand Hill Road, Suite 200, Menlo Park, CA 94025. Protiviti Inc. is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Robert Half Inc. ("RH") represented by Advocate Fatema Feroz Hussain, M/s. K & S Partners, Chimes 61, Sector 44, Gurgaon 122 003, Phone No: +91 124 4708 700, Mobile No: +91 92897 35110 E-mail: fatema@knspartners.com
- 2. The Respondent is Protiviti Fd Indra chuk, Pune-2473 Maharashtra Email: protivitifd@gmail.com (+91)8859304367 is the Registrant of the disputed domain name" protivitigroups.in".

II. APPLICABLE LAW AND JURISDICTION

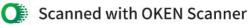
The .IN Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy

The present arbitration proceeding is under and in accordance with the .IN Domain

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Name Dispute Resolution Policy (the Policy) which was adopted by the National Internet Exchange of India (NIXI) and sets out the legal framework for resolution of disputes between a domain name registrant and a Complainant arising out of the registration and use of an .IN Domain Name By registering the domain name < protivitigroups.in > with the NIXI accredited Registrar, the Respondent has agreed to the resolution of disputes under the .IN Dispute Resolution Policy and Rules framed thereunder The Policy and the .IN Domain Name Dispute Resolution Rules of Procedure posted 2020 (the Rules) were approved by NIXI in accordance with the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996.

III. Filing of the Complaint and Constitution of the Arbitral Tribunal

- 1. The Complainant filed the Complaint under the .IN Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy against the Respondents seeking transfer of the Domain Name www.protivitigroups.in to the Complainant, Following which, the .IN Registry sought the consent of Tmt.M.SHIRIJHA (the undersigned), who is a listed .IN Dispute Resolution Arbitrator under 5 (a) of the Rules, to act as Arbitrator in the said matter.
- On 14th January 2025 the Arbitral Tribunal consisting of the said Tmt.M.SHIRIJHA
 as Sole Arbitrator was constituted under 5(b) of the Rules in respect of the Complaint filed by
 PROTIVITI INC. against Protiviti Fd Indra chuk, Pune-2473 Maharashtra, the Respondent.
- 3. On 15th January 2025 On the Direction of the learned Arbitraor, the Ld. Advocate for the Complainant filed the amended Complaint with Index and pagination of the Complaint, along with complete set of annexures.
- Immediately thereafter, on 21st January 2025, the Arbitral Tribunal issued the Notice of Arbitration under 5(c) of the Rules. to the parties for commencement of Arbitral Proceedings.
- 5. The Arbitral Tribunal has been constituted properly and in accordance with the Arbitration and Conciliation Act 1996, the INDRP Policy and the Rules as amended from time to time. No party has objected to the constitution and jurisdiction of the Arbitral Tribunal and to the arbitrability of the dispute.

IV. THE DOMAIN NAME, REGISTRAR & REGISTRANT

The details of the Respondent, have been REDACTED FOR PRIVACY. The particulars of the registration of the domain name WWW. < www.protivitigroups.in > as found in the .IN

M.SHIRIJHA B.SC., M.L. STS Law Associates 2/669A, River View Enclave, First Main Read, Manapakkam, Chennai - 600 125. Registry database are set out below:

Domain Name: protivitigroups.in

Domain ID: DDC3393C0A31747FFA6827D6B766FDCCF-IN

Registrant ID: CR756213405 Registrant Name: Protiviti Fd

Registrant Organization:

Registrant Street: Indra chuk

Registrant City: Pune

Registrant State/Province: Maharashtra

Registrant Postal Code: 2473 Registrant Country: India

Registrant Phone: (+91)8859304367

Registrant Email: protivitifd@gmail.com

The Registrar with whom the subject domain name is registered: GoDaddy.com, LLC

V. PROCEDURAL HISTORY

- 1. The Sole Arbitrator, Tmt.M.Shirijha was appointed On 14th January 2025 for the INDRP case no. 1899 regarding the Complaint dated September 23, 2024 filed under the INDRP.
- 2. On 15th January 2025 the Arbitral Tribunal directed the Complainant to file Corrected Vakalathname and the Complaint and accordingly the Advocate for the Complainant filed the Amended Complaint with Index and pagination of the Complaint, along with complete set of annexures finally on 20th January 2025.
- 3. Immediately thereafter, on 21st January 2025, the Arbitral Tribunal issued the Notice of Arbitration under 5(c) of the Rules , to the parties for commencement of Arbitral Proceedings Respondent by email with the Complaint and Annexures enclosed and directed the Complainant to serve the said Notice to the Respondent both Online and Offline to the address mentioned therein. The Respondent was given an opportunity to file a response in writing in opposition to the Complaint, if any along with evidence in support of its stand or contention on or before seven working days from the date of receipt of the said Notice.
- 4. On 4th February 2025, the Complainant's Learned Counsel informed the Arbitral Tribunal that they have served the copy of the Complaint along with the annexures to the

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Respondent's E mail address via email dated January 21, 2025, and the same has been delivered to them And submitted the said email copy and email delivery proof.

- 5. In the interest of justice the Arbitral Tribunal under Rule 13 of the INDRP Rules of Procedure granted the Respondent a further opportunity to file in writing in opposition to the Complaint, if any, along with evidence in support of its stand or contention by directing the Complainant to submit the proof of service of the Arbitral Notice along with the Complaint Copy with Annexures to Respondent's Official Address as shown in the WHOIS details. The Complainant also submitted the proof of Notice sent through Courier on January 21, 2025 to the Respondent's Official address but the same was returned unserved and submitted a screenshot of the same . On the direction of the Arbitral Tribunal they submitted the scanned copy of returned cover and accordingly, the service on the Respondent was done in accordance with Rule 2(a) of the Rules.
- 6. As The Respondent did not respond to the notice issued on 21st January 2025 even after giving sufficient time, on 6th February 2025, The Arbitral Tribunal recorded the non appearance of the Respondent and set them exparte.

VI. COMPLAINANT'S CONTENTIONS

- 1. The Complainant is a highly respected global consulting firm assisting companies with corporate governance initiatives, as well as solutions for business problems in technology, business processes, analytics, risk, compliance and internal audits, and was founded in 2002. The Complainant's services are marketed and offered throughout the world under the PROTIVITI and PROTIVITI-formative marks (hereinafter referred to as "the PROTIVITI Marks"). Since 2002, continuously and exclusively, Protiviti has used PROTIVITI as a trademark, alone or in combination with other elements, in connection with the Complainant's various audit and consulting services provided throughout the world. With particular reference to India, the mark PROTIVITI has been in use since the year 2006. During the course of its business, Protiviti has successfully obtained numerous trademark registrations for its PROTIVITI marks jurisdictions around the globe, including in India, the United States, Australia, Canada, China, Japan, the European Union, Singapore, and the United Kingdom. Most relevantly, Protiviti's Indian trademark registrations are currently valid, subsisting. The Complainant, today, holds all the rights, benefits and interests in connection with and arising out of the mark 'PROTIVITI', and all other intellectual property rights associated with the PROTIVITI products/ services.
 - 2. The Complainant spends an enormous amount of time, money, and effort in

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promoting its PROTIVITI Marks and associated services and in developing its website accessible through the domain name protiviti.com>. The Complainant has advertised and promoted its services under the PROTIVITI Marks, and has received many prestigious awards and due to the Complainant's extensive sales, the PROTIVITI Marks are well-known and associated exclusively with the Complainant and its services and therefore of tremendous value to the Complainant. The Complainant's stakeholder network consists of more than 11,000 employees in more than 90 offices across 25 countries worldwide. As a result of the time, effort, and money invested in its business and in its PROTIVITI Marks, the Complainant has achieved a reputation for excellence in the rendering of its business consulting services. The mark 'PROTIVITI' forms part of the trading name of the Complainant "PROTIVITI INC." and the Complainant has served more than 80 percent of Fortune 100 and nearly 80 percent of Fortune 500 companies. Hence, over years of extensive and widespread reputation and use, the mark 'PROTIVITI' has come to be exclusively associated with the Complainant.

- The Complainant duly obtained the registration of the domain name protiviti.com> and currently hosts an interactive website at https://www.protiviti.com/ which can be accessed by internet users around the world including those in India. This website carries updated information on the corporate history and current products/services of the Complainant under the PROTIVITI Marks, which forms a dominant part of the subject domain name. The Complainant's company and its products/services are continually advertised and receive public recognition vide its official Linkedin page. The Complainant's company does marketing worldwide mainly through Google Ads and the social networking platforms, Facebook, Instagram etc. where it has India dedicated handles as well. In India, the Complainant operates as 'Protiviti Consulting Private Limited' and under its Member Firms such as - Protiviti India Member Private Ltd and Protiviti Advisory India Member LLP. The Complainant has several offices located in Bengaluru, Bhubaneswar, Chennai, Coimbatore, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Mumbai, New Delhi, Noida and Gurugram.
- 4. The Complainant recently learnt of the existence of the domain name protivitigroups.in> which prominently contains the mark PROTIVITI and is virtually identical to the Complainant's subject domain name cprotiviti.com>and immediately conducted a Whois search to ascertain the registrant of the said domain name and to gather further details thereof. It was revealed that the domain name in question < protivitigroups.in > is registered

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in the name of the Respondent on or about April 28, 2024 through the registrar GoDaddy.com, LLC, who appears to be misusing a privacy shield. The registration date of the subject domain name is well after the Complainant's registration dates of its PROTIVITI Marks, with the earliest one dating back to 2006. The said subject domain name re-directs to the Complainant's website protiviti.com. Notably, the subject domain name incorporates the entire, identical wellknown PROTIVITI house mark and adds the term "GROUPS" in it and the top-level domain extension ".in".

- 5. Hence the Present Complaint is filed on the following Grounds:
- 1) The subject domain name protivitigroups.in> is virtually identical to the trademark PROTIVITI of the Complainant. The subject domain name highly similar in appearance, sight, sound, and connotation to Complainant's PROTIVITI Marks well-known PROTIVITI house mark and adds the term "GROUPS" and the top-level domain extension ".in". These additions are wholly inadequate to negate the confusing similarities between the subject domain name and the PROTIVITI Marks. The Respondent's incorporation of the entire, identical PROTIVITI house mark, with the mere addition of the word "GROUPS" after the PROTIVITI house mark is aimed to hijack the Complainant's brand and is deliberately designed to confuse the subject
- 2) The Complainant has statutory and common law rights in the trademark and trade name PROTIVITI as
- (a) by virtue of prior adoption and use thereof as a trade name, trademark and domain name; and by virtue of prior registrations and Pursuant to the long, continuous and extensive use of the PROTIVITI Marks internationally and the substantial expenditure incurred in its promotion and advertising worldwide, the PROTIVITI Marks are exclusively associated with the business of the Complainant; and
- (b) The PROTIVITI Marks are entitled to be protected against any misuse whatsoever including that by the Respondent.

The "overall impression" left by the domain name suggests that this domain name belongs to the Complainant and consumer confusion will inevitably result and This is particularly because the subject domain name redirects to the Complainant's website as per the viewer's location i.e. if the subject domain name/website is accessed by an internet user in the US, it will redirect the user to the US-specific page of the Complainant's website. Being the registered proprietor of the PROTIVITI Marks, it has statutory rights in the same as also

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common law rights by virtue of long and continuous use and the subject domain name violates the same.

- 3) The Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the subject domain name. The Respondent is not connected with the Complainant in any manner and the Complainant has no knowledge of the Respondent. The Complainant has not authorized or licensed the Respondent to apply for, register, use or offer for sale the subject domain name or any trademarks forming part thereof. By adopting a nearly identical domain name, the Respondent is attempting to mislead consumers into believing that the Respondent's business and services have some nexus with and/or are endorsed by the Complainant and/or licensed by the Complainant.
- 4) The Respondent's action of registering a domain name in which it has no rights or legitimate interests is done with an intent to commercially gain and take undue advantage of the reputation and goodwill of the Complainant in its well-known PROTVITI Marks which is evident from the fact that the subject domain name redirects to the Complainant's website https://www.protiviti.com/in-en. By registering the subject domain name, the Respondent has intentionally attempted to disrupt the Indian business of the Complainant as any person looking for information regarding the goods and services under the PROTIVITI Marks would necessarily actions in this regard amount to unfair trade competition/passing off and trademark infringement, at a minimum, under Indian law.
- 5) The Respondent has not made any demonstrable preparations to use the subject domain name in connection with a bona fide offering of its own goods or services which is evident from its malafide attempt to associate it with the Complainant's business as the subject domain name redirects to Complainant's website;
- 6) The very act of registration of the subject domain name by the Respondent is an instance of bad faith.

The Complainant thus believes that it is highly likely that the Respondent for both the domain names could be the same and is therefore possible that the said domain names are being registered and used to scam consumers all around the world by falsely associating with

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the Complainant's well- established business. Accordingly, the Respondent's registration of the subject domain name cprotivitigroups.in> is contrary to and in violation of paragraph 4 of the INDRP Policy. it is therefore prayed to pass an Order that the subject domain name cprotivitigroups.in> be transferred to the Complainant.

VII. DISCUSSIONS AND FINDINGS:

The Hon'ble Apex Court of India has repeatedly held that even in an uncontested matter the Plaintiff's case must stand on its own legs and it cannot derive any advantage by the absence of the defendants. Accordingly, A Complainant who alleges that the disputed domain name conflicts with its legitimate rights or interests must establish the following three elements required by Paragraph 4 of the INDRP Policy namely:

- a) The Respondent's domain name is identical and confusingly similar to the trademark or service mark in which the Complainant has rights.
 - b) The Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the domain name
 - c) The Respondent's domain name has been registered or is being used in bad faith.

Accordingly, the Arbitral Tribunal shall deal with each of the elements as under:

- a) Whether the Respondent domain name <WWW. PROTIVITIGROUPS.IN> is identical and/or deceptively similar to domain name and trademarks of the Complainant?
- i) The Complainant provided evidence with the Annexures, to establish that the Disputed Domain name is identical or confusingly similar to the Complainant's registered and distinctive trademark
- ii) The copy of the trademark registration certificate of Domain Name PROTIVITI' and WHOIS records shows Complainant is the owner of the trademark registrations in India.
- iii) it is further evident from the WHOIS records that The disputed domain name by Respondent, i.e. PROTIVITIGROUPS was acquired long after the 'PROTIVITI' trademark was recognised.
- iv) The Extensive Annexures shows that The Complainant holds PROTIVITI' trademark registrations in India and because of the extensive use and promotion of the

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PROTIVITI 'trademark, the brand has gained recognition.

- v) It is the contention of the Complainant that The subject domain name cprotivitigroups.in> is virtually identical to the trademark PROTIVITI of the Complainant . If We examine both the Disputed Domain name and that of the Complainant's, The Complainant's domain name is 'www.PROTIVITI.com' but the Disputed Domain name is 'PROTIVITI'GROUPS.in' . it is true that the Doman name has the words 'PROTIVITI' identical to that of the Complainant's Domain name. But it has an additional term "GROUPS" in it and the top-level domain extension ".in" instead of the Complainant's Domain name which has the domain extension ".com" Then the question arises whether The subject domain name is highly similar in appearance, sight, sound, and connotation to Complainant's PROTIVITI Marks, as claimed by them.
- vi) The Arbitral Tribunal took notice of the decision in Fendi Sr.I. v. Ndiaye Therese, WTPO Case No. D2018-0179; Birdies, Inc. v. Registration Private, Domains By Proxy, LLC/Fu Li, WIPO Case No. D2019- 2134, which through a catena of Orders passed by this Panel and WIPO (under the UDRP), states that domain extensions such as ".com" and ".in" are to be ignored while assessing whether a domain name is identical or confusing similar to a trade mark, the disputed domain name is regarded confusingly similar to that mark for the purposes of UDRP standing. The Arbitral Tribunal also took note of the decisions of WIPO Panel's in WhatsallJ2 Inc. v. Warrick Mulder, JNDRP Case No. 1233, dated July 22, 2020; Havells India Limited vs. Joio Alappat, INDRP Case No. 1025, dated October 4, 2018; Voltas Limited v. Sergi Avaliani, INDRP Case No. 1257, dated September 22, 2020; and be/N Media Group L.L.C v._Rima Muliawati WIPO Case No. D2021-1076 .
- vii) Following the said dicta referred above, and upon the facts and circumstances of the present case and the evidence placed before it, The Tribunal founds that) The subject domain name cprotivitigroups.in> is virtually identical to the trademark PROTIVITI of the Complainant. It is also evident from the evidence placed that the Respondent is not commonly known by PROTIVITIGROUPS ', nor does it conduct any legitimate business under such a name, as claimed by the Complainant.

viii) Taking into consideration the facts of the present case and the settled law on the

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2/669A, River View Enclave, First Main Road, Manapakkam, Chennai - 600 125. issue, it is evident that the disputed domain name registered by the Respondent establishes a likelihood of confusion with the Complaint's trademark and this would mislead the internet users as it is confusingly identical.

Accordingly, the Arbitral Tribunal holds that the requirement of the first element in the INDRP Policy Paragraph 4(a) is satisfied as the Respondent's domain name is confusingly similar to Complainant's registered and distinctive PROTIVITI' trademark.

b) Whether the Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in respect of the domain name?

- i) To pass muster under Paragraph 4(b) of the INDRP Policy, the Complainant has to show that the Respondent has no rights and legitimate interests I n the disputed domain name under Paragraph 6 of the Policy.
- ii). Evidence was provided by the Complainant to show that The Respondent is not affiliated with Complainant in any way and has never been authorised or licensed by Complainant to use or register its trademarks, or to seek registration of any domain name incorporating the trademark in question.
- iii) To prove that the Respondent actions are most certainly not a bona fide offering of goods and services under Policy Paragraph 6 (a), and therefore domain name impersonates the Complainant's trademark, Reference has been made to the Annexures regarding the Complainant's trade mark' PROTIVITI' and Respondent disputed domain name <www. PROTIVITIGROUPS.IN>. A careful perusal of the above shows that the Respondent is not commonly known by the Disputed Domain Name or the name PROTIVITIGROUPS' and nor does the Respondent operate a legitimate business or other organisation under the PROTIVITIGROUPS' trademark. Additionally, the ' PROTIVITIGROUPS ' trademark was registered years before the disputed domain name was registered and hence the Respondent domain name impersonates the Complainant's and the same is not bonafide.

Accordingly, the Arbitral Tribunal finds that the Complainant has made out a prima facie case that the Respondent has no rights and legitimate interests in respect of the disputed domain name < WWW. PROTIVITIGROUPS. IN> as Complainant has never assigned, granted,

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licensed, sold, transferred, or otherwise authorised Respondent to register or use the Disputed Domain Name or the PROTIVITIGROUPS Trademark and the same is also not used for making legitimate non-commercial use. Thus, it satisfies the second element under Paragraph 4 (b) of the Policy.

c) Whether the Respondent domain name was registered or is being used in absolute bad faith?

- The Complainant states that it is a highly respected global consulting firm assisting companies with corporate governance initiatives, as well as solutions for business problems in technology, business processes, analytics, risk, compliance and internal audits, and was founded in 2002. The Complainant's services are marketed and offered throughout the world under the PROTIVITI Marks". Since 2006, the mark PROTIVITI has been in use in India and Protiviti has successfully obtained numerous trademark registrations for its PROTIVITI marks in jurisdictions around the globe and The Complainant, today, holds all the rights, benefits and interests in connection with and arising out of the mark 'PROTIVITI', and all other intellectual property rights associated with the PROTIVITI products/ services.
- ii) The Complainant provided the following reasons to show that the Respondent acquired the disputed domain name in bad faith-

Firstly, the Respondent used the <www.PROTIVITIGROUPS.IN>trademark without consent from the Complainant.

Secondly, Respondent was aware of Complainant's rights in its well-known trademark as a consequence of Complainant's substantial use of the trademark which predates before the Respondent acquired the domain name.

Thirdly, The domain name is only registered with no apparent legitimate purpose and holding on to the same with absolute no justification except to make wrongful profit therefrom. Non-use, registration of domain soon after acquisition and passive holding are evidence of bad properly configured the does not faith registration. In fact, the registrant domain < WWW. PROTIVITIGROUPS.IN>

Complainant's domain Respondent impersonated the Fourthly, The **<WWW.** PROTIVITIGROUPS.IN> which demonstrates its purpose to deceive users for commercial benefit and to harm Complainant's business by redirecting people to the infringing domain name and also making illegitimate commercial gains by banking on the hard-earned goodwill and reputation of the Complainant which is done in bad faith.

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in HSBC Holding§ [1_lc v. Hooman Esmail Zadeh, INDRP Case no 032, dated March 20, 2007; Visteon Corporation v. Prahlad S., INDRP Case No. 1535, dated May 6, 2022; Solidium Oy v. Privacy Service Provided by Withheld for Privacy ehfl EstormH Etormhosting. Estorm Programming, WIPO Case No. D2022-3139; LPL Financial LLC v. Privacy Service Provided by Withheld for Privacy ehf I Steffen Hain, WIPO Case No. D2022-0542 it was held that the mere registration of an identical domain name by an unaffiliated entity can by itself create a presumption of bad faith

On careful consideration of the above findings, the Arbitral Tribunal accepts the contentions of the Complainant and holds that the Respondent domain name < www. PROTIVITIGROUPS.IN>has been registered with an opportunistic intention and is being used in bad faith. Therefore, the third element in paragraph 4(c) of the Policy has been satisfied.

VIII. DISPOSITIONS

The Arbitral Tribunal holds that The three elements set out in paragraph 4 of the INDRP Policy that

- i) The Respondent domain name < < WWW.PROTIVITIGROUPS.IN > is identical and confusingly similar to the name, trademark and brand name < WWW. PROTIVITI.COM> by the Complainant.
- ii) The Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in the domain name < WWW.PROTIVITIGROUPS.IN> and
- iii) the same has been registered in bad faith. have been established by the Complainant and hence It is entitled for the relief sought for.

For the foregoing reasons stated above, The Arbitral Tribunal directs that: The Disputed Domain name <WWW.PROTIVITIGROUPS.IN> be transferred to the Complainant, PROTIVITI INC. 2884 Sand Hill Road, Suite 200 Menlo Park, CA 94025 India.

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Place: Chennai

Dated: 16th Febraury 2025

M.SHIRIJHA

Sole Arbitrator,

The Arbitral Tribunal

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