upon the said authority/Arbitrator to perform the task entrusted to it within the time schedule prescribed in the statute. The delay, if any, has to be bonafide and explainable. However, in the present petition even after completion of the pleadings, the Arbitrator has closed the proceedings since the time limit for arbitral proceedings to pass an award had elapsed.

8. In view of aforesaid discussions and taking into consideration the attending facts and circumstances of the instant case, after allowing the present petition, after allowing the present petition, the Arbitrator-cum-Divisional Commissioner, Kangra Division at Dharamshala., exercising the powers of Arbitrator under Section 3 of the National Highways Act, 1956 is directed to conclude the arbitral proceedings and to pass the arbitral award in Reference Petition No. 575 of 2022, on or before **13th April, 2027**.

9. The learned Arbitrator-cum-Divisional Commissioner, Kangra Division at Dharamshala, is directed to serve claimant/respondent No.1 through counsel, who was representing him before the said authority and after the service of respondent No.1, he shall proceed in the matter, in accordance with law.

10. The petition stands disposed of in the aforesaid terms.

(Romesh Verma)
Judge

14th October, 2026.
(vt)

High Court of H.P.

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