

IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA AT CHANDIGARH

CWP No. 22259 of 2015

Date of Decision: 11.2.2016

Talwinder Singh and others

....Petitioners.

Versus

Union of India and others

...Respondents.

1. Whether the Reporters of the local papers may be allowed to see the judgment?
2. To be referred to the Reporters or not?
3. Whether the judgment should be reported in the Digest?

**CORAM:- HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE AJAY KUMAR MITTAL.
HON'BLE MRS. JUSTICE RAJ RAHUL GARG.**

PRESENT: Mr. Premjit Kalia, Advocate for the petitioners.

Mr. Sunil K. Sharma, Advocate for respondent No.1.

Mr. Sunil K. Sahore, Advocate for respondent No.2.

Ms. Sudeepti Sharma, DAG, Punjab.

AJAY KUMAR MITTAL, J.

1. Written statement on behalf of respondent No.3 by way of an affidavit of Rohit Gupta, Sub Divisional Magistrate, Amritsar-I-cum-Competent Authority, and Acquisition filed today in Court is taken on record.

2. In this petition filed under Articles 226/227 of the Constitution of India, the petitioners have prayed for issuance of a writ in the nature of mandamus directing the respondents to pay solatium and other statutory benefits under Sections 23(1-A), 23(2), 28 and 34 of the

Land Acquisition Act, 1894 (in short "the Act") along with interest in view of the judgment of this Court **M/s Golden Iron and Steel Forgings versus Union of India and others, 2011 (4) RCR (Civil) 375.**

3. The land of the petitioners had been acquired by respondents No.1 and 3 under the National Highways Act, 1956.

4. The award was passed in the year 2009 (Annexure P-1) by the Land Acquisition Collector/Competent Authority.

5. The petitioners' main grievance is that while assessing the compensation, the benefits of Sections 23(1-A), 23(2), 28 and 34 of the Act, namely, solatium and other statutory benefits along with interest were not granted to them despite the fact that this Court in **M/s Golden Iron and Steel Forgings' case (supra)**, has categorically held that even in the case of acquisition under the National Highways Act, 1956, the above mentioned two statutory benefits are equally admissible to the affected land-owners. The petitioners also rely upon two decisions of this Court, both dated 27.9.2012 passed in **CWP No.7457 of 2012 (Bhag Singh and another versus Commissioner, Jalandhar Division and others)** and **CWP No.14642 of 2012 (Prem Kaur versus Union of India and others)** whereby the benefits of solatium and interest in terms of the above-cited decision of this Court, have been extended to the similarly situated land-owners. Reliance was placed upon the orders, Annexures P-2 and P-3, respectively, passed by this Court in similar circumstances.

6. Another grievance of the petitioners is that besides submission of applications etc., they are running from pillar to post before the officers of respondent No.2- National Highways Authority for the release of abovementioned benefits but the same are withheld only

on the plea that no directions have been given by this Court in their case(s). The aggrieved petitioners have now approached this Court.

7. We have heard learned counsel for the parties at some length and gone through the record.

8. The principles laid down by this Court in M/s Golden Iron and Steel Forgings's case (supra), are not in dispute. Further, the fact that the benefits of solatium and interest have been extended by this Court to the similarly situated land-owners vide order dated 27.09.2012 in Bhag Singh's case (supra), can also be hardly disputed. In these circumstances, we are of the view that it is imperative upon respondent Nos.1 & 2 to consider the petitioners' claim for the grant of solatium and interest in accordance with the decision of this Court in M/s Golden Iron and Steel Forgings's case (supra).

9. The writ petition is accordingly disposed of in the following terms:-

- (i) The petitioners shall move application(s) before the notified Competent Authority-cum-Land Acquisition Collector within a period of one month for the grant of aforesaid benefits;
- (ii) The said Competent Authority will issue notice and call for the records/reply from the National Highway Authority of India;
- (iii) The Competent Authority shall thereafter determine whether or not the petitioners are entitled to the aforesaid benefits, especially in view of the decisions of this Court and the Hon'ble Supreme Court relied upon by the claimants;

- (iv) If the petitioners are found entitled to, a self speaking supplementary Award to this effect shall be passed within a period of four months from the date of filing of the application(s);
- (v) The National Highways Authority of India shall deposit the amount, if any, payable in terms of supplementary award, in interest-bearing fixed deposit account(s) in any nationalized bank till the final decision of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in **Civil Appeal No. 10695 of 2011 titled as M/s Golden Iron & Steel Forgings v. Union of India and others** and **Special Leave to Appeal (Civil) No.15104 of 2014 titled: Project Director, National Highway, No. IV vs. Rajeshwar Singh and Ors.**

10. Writ petition stands disposed of accordingly.

(AJAY KUMAR MITTAL)
JUDGE

February 11, 2016
gbs

(RAJ RAHUL GARG)
JUDGE