

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

DATED : 26.09.2018

CORAM:

THE HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE R.SUBBIAH

AND

THE HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE R.PONGIAPPAN

WRIT PETITION No.24930 of 2018

M/s.Karthik Raja Exports,
rep. by its Proprietor,
Mr.R.Shanmugam,
R23A/A2, Ambattur Industrial Estate Road,
Anna Nagar West,
Chennai 600 040. ... Petitioner

Vs.

The Member Secretary,
State Environment Impact Assessment Authority,
Ground Floor, Panagal Maligai,
No.1, Jeenis Road,
Saidapet, Chennai 600 015. ... Respondent

Writ Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India praying for the issuance of a Writ of Mandamus directing the Respondent to consider the application for Environmental Clearance made by the Petitioner vide Online SEAC proposal No.SIA/TN/MIN/23298/2018, dated 02.04.2018, without insisting on any Public hearing in respect of quarrying of black granite in Patta land to an extent of 1.44.5 ha. at S.F.Nos.1/10, 1/11, 1/13A, 1/13B, 1/14 and 1/16 of Semangalam & Kunnam Villages, Vanur Taluk, Villupuram District, Tamil Nadu and pass orders on the same expeditiously.

For Petitioner : Mr.V.Suthakar

For Respondent : Mr.V.Anandhamoorthy,
Additional Government Pleader

O R D E R

(Order of the Court was made by R.SUBBIAH, J.)

Petitioner has come up with the present Writ Petition seeking a direction to the Respondent to consider the application for Environmental Clearance made by him vide Online SEAC proposal No.SIA/TN/MIN/23298/2018, dated 02.04.2018, without insisting on any Public hearing in respect of quarrying of black granite in Patta land to an extent of 1.44.5 ha. at S.F.Nos.1/10, 1/11, 1/13A, 1/13B, 1/14 and 1/16 of Semangalam & Kunnam Villages, Vanur Taluk, Villupuram District, Tamil Nadu and pass orders on the same, expeditiously.

2. According to the Petitioner, under Notification vide S.O.141(E), dated 15.01.2016 issued by the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEF & CC), the Mining Lease area of the

Petitioner is classified as Category B2, being less than 5 ha. Subsequently, the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEF & CC) issued a Notification dated 14.03.2017 setting out the procedure, by which the applications for Environmental Clearance by the proponents, who had been operating their Units without obtaining prior Environmental Clearance as per Notification dated 15.01.2016, will be considered as cases of 'violation' and all such proposals were to be submitted before MoEF & CC, New Delhi.

3. The Petitioner had originally applied for Environmental Clearance to the Respondent herein on 30.01.2017 for the existing Granite quarry in Patta land to an extent of 1.44.5 ha. at S.F.Nos.1/10, 1/11, 1/13A, 1/13B, 1/14 and 1/16 of Semangalam & Kunnam Villages, Vanur Taluk, Villupuram District, Tamil Nadu. Thereafter, the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, New Delhi issued further Notifications, dated 08.03.2018 and 15.03.2018, whereby the Ministry directed that projects falling under Category 'B' shall be appraised by the State Authority, namely, the State Environment Impact and Assessment Authority (SEIAA), Tamil Nadu.

4. The Petitioner, then, submitted his proposal for grant of Environmental Clearance (EC) to the Respondent vide Online SEAC proposal No.SIA/TN/MIN/23298/2018, dated 02.04.2018. The Respondent appraised the proposal of the Petitioner as a violation case in the 107th SEAC meeting held on 13.04.2018 and after due consideration of the proposal, the Respondent granted Terms of Reference (ToR) to the Petitioner vide Letter No.SEIAA-TN/F.No.6218/TOR-341/2018, dated 14.05.2018. The Petitioner complied with the directions contained in the ToR and submitted a detailed Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) to the Respondent on 09.07.2018. However, the Respondent has orally informed the Petitioner that online submission of the Report shall be made after completion of a public hearing in respect of the project. The Petitioner has also submitted his request for grant of Environmental Clearance through representation dated 09.07.2018 along with the EIA Report.

5. It is represented by the learned Counsel for the Petitioner that as per the latest Notification, if the area of quarry is less than 5 hectares, there is no requirement of a public hearing. In support of his submission, the learned counsel produced a copy of the Notification dated 14.08.2018 issued by the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, New Delhi.

6. We have heard the learned counsel on either side and perused the material documents available on record.

7. Considering the facts and circumstances of the case and taking note of the submissions made by the learned counsel on either side, this Court directs the Respondent/Member Secretary, State Environment Impact Assessment Authority, to consider the pending application of the Petitioner for Environmental Clearance, in accordance with the Notification dated 14.08.2018 issued by the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, New Delhi, and pass appropriate orders within a period of four (4) weeks from the date of receipt of a copy of this order.

The Writ Petition stands disposed of with the above direction. No costs.

(R.P.S.J.) (R.P.A.J.)

26.09.2018

Index : Yes / No

Speaking Order : Yes / No

(aeb)

To:

The Member Secretary,

State Environment Impact Assessment Authority,
Ground Floor, Panagal Maligai,
No.1, Jeenis Road,
Saidapet, Chennai 600 015.

R.SUBBIAH, J.
and
R.PONGIAPPAN, J.
(aeb)

Order in
W.P.No.24930 of 2018

26.09.2018