

THE HON'BLE SRI JUSTICE P.V.SANJAY KUMAR

C.C.No.236 of 2016

ORDER:

This contempt case was instituted alleging deliberate and willful disobedience to the order dated 16.11.2015 passed by this court in W.P.No.37088 of 2015. By the said order, this court directed the authorities concerned to process the quarry release application of the petitioner within the time stipulated and to pass final orders thereon. This court further noted that as the time stipulation fixed by the relevant Government Order had already expired, the exercise should be completed expeditiously and in any event not later than 30 days from the date of receipt of a copy of the order.

2. This contempt case was filed on 10.02.2016 alleging that Sri Siddharth Jain, District Collector, Chittoor, the respondent herein, did not take consequential action pursuant to the order of this court, despite meetings being conducted on 17.01.2016 and 04.02.2016.

3. This Court is now informed that the application of the petitioner was rejected on 04.02.2016 by the District Level Scrutiny Committee and the same was communicated to the petitioner, under letter dated 18.02.2016 of the Assistant Director of Mines and Geology, Chittoor.

4. The counter filed by Sri Siddharth Jain, District Collector, Chittoor, demonstrates that though he received a copy of the order passed by this Court in W.P.No.37088 of 2015 on 07.12.2015, it was only on 17.01.2016 that the first meeting of the District Level Scrutiny Committee was conducted. The second meeting was conducted on 04.02.2016 and pursuant thereto, the application of the petitioner was rejected. It is therefore clear that the respondent herein paid scant regard to the time stipulation fixed by this Court for disposing of the petitioner's application. Be it noted that G.O.Ms.No.181, Industries and

Commerce (Mines-I) Department, dated 28.05.1998, which deals with issue of mining lease, itself stipulates the time limits within which mining lease applications need to be processed. Keeping in mind the fact that the time stipulation fixed therein had already expired in the context of the petitioner's application, this Court extended the time by 30 days. Despite such extension, the counter affidavit filed by the District Collector clearly demonstrates that he had no regard or respect for either the time stipulation fixed in the relevant G.O. or by this Court in the final order dated 16.11.2015 in W.P.No.37088 of 2015. It is indeed distressing that government officials do not pay any heed to time stipulations fixed by this Court even for mere consideration of representations/applications, which they are bound to undertake within the time stipulated as per government orders extant. The lackadaisical attitude of the respondent, no less than a District Collector, is writ large in this regard. However, as the order passed by this Court has been complied with in substance, *albeit*, with delay, this Court is not inclined to take the matter further with regard to the delay in compliance.

5. The contempt case is accordingly closed. Registry is directed to forward a copy of this order to the Chief Secretary, State of Andhra Pradesh.

6. Pending applications shall stand closed in the light of this order. No costs.

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(P.V.SANJAY KUMAR,J)

Date: 15.06.2018

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