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* **IN THE HIGH COURT OF DELHI AT NEW DELHI**

% *Date of Judgment: 06th February, 2018*

+ W.P.(C) 2541/2015

NATHAN SINGH GULSHAN @ NATHAN Petitioner
Through: Mr.B.S.Maan and Mr.Shitiz
Agnihotri, Advocates.

versus

GOVT. OF NCT OF DELHI AND ORS. Respondents
Through: Mr.Siddharth Panda, Advocate for
respondent nos.1 & 2.
Mr.Pulkit Choudhary, Advocate for
applicant in CM No.35284/2017.
Mr.S.K.Rout, Mr. Varun Goswami
and Mr.Rahul Sinha, Advocates for
applicant in CM No.616/2017.

CORAM:

HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE G.S.SISTANI

HON'BLE MS. JUSTICE SANGITA DHINGRA SEHGAL

G.S.SISTANI, J. (ORAL)

CM No.35284/2017 & 616/2017 (impleadment)

By these applications, the applicants Ms.Ravita, Mr.Kali Ram and Mr.Tilak Raj, seek their impleadment in the writ petition.

Mr.Maan, counsel for the petitioner without admitting that the applicants have any share in the property, submits that he has no objection, if the present applications are allowed.

Heard.

Accordingly, the present applications are allowed, subject to all just exceptions. The applicants Ms.Ravita, Mr.Kali Ram and Mr.Tilak Raj are impleaded as respondent nos.4 to 6.

Both the applications are disposed of.

W.P.(C) 2541/2015

1. This is a petition under Article 226 of the Constitution of India. The petitioner and respondent nos.4 to 6 seek a declaration that the acquisition proceedings in respect of the land of the petitioner to the extent of 1/6th share admeasuring 4 bighas, 2 biswas and 6 biswansi, out of Khasra No.28 min(1-10), 37(4-16), 38(4-14), 47(4-4), 57(4-16), 58(4-16) situated in the revenue estate of village Sayoorpur, New Delhi (hereinafter referred to as 'the subject land') stands lapsed in view of Section 24 (2) of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 (hereinafter referred to as '2013 Act'), as the compensation pursuant to 1/6th share of Shri Singan @ Sangan has not been paid.
2. In this case, a Notification under Section 4 of the Land Acquisition Act, 1894 (hereinafter referred to as 'the Act') was issued on 25.11.1980, a declaration under Section 6 of the Act was issued on 07.06.1985 and an Award bearing No.10/1987-88 was passed on 14.05.1987. Counsel for the petitioner submits that the case of the petitioner is fully covered by a decision rendered by the Apex Court in the case of ***Pune Municipal Corporation & Anr. v. Harakchand Misirimal Solanki & ors.***, reported at (2014) 3 SCC 183, as the compensation pursuant to 1/6th share of Shri Singan @ Sangan has not been paid.
3. Mr.Panda confirms the fact while relying on para 8 of the counter affidavit that although the possession has been taken, the

compensation amount of 1/6th share of Shri Sagan has not been tendered. Para 8 of the counter affidavit filed by LAC reads as under:

“8. That in the present case, the possession of the land of the petitioner was taken over and handed over to the beneficiary department on 14.07.1987. It would be clear from the possession proceeding report that the land in question was vacant and possession was taken from the land owners. The compensation amount with respect to 5/6th share in the above said lands were paid to the recorded owners and 1/6th share of Sh. Sagan was sent in RD as nobody approaches to claim the compensation. Further, possession of large tract of land forming part of this notification has already been taken over by the Government”.

4. We have heard the counsel for the parties.
5. In the case of ***Pune Municipal Corporation & Anr.(supra)***, in paras 14 to 20, it was held as under:

“14. Section 31(1) of the 1894 Act enjoins upon the Collector, on making an award under Section 11, to tender payment of compensation to persons interested entitled thereto according to award. It further mandates the Collector to make payment of compensation to them unless prevented by one of the contingencies contemplated in sub-section (2). The contingencies contemplated in Section 31(2) are: (i) the persons interested entitled to compensation do not consent to receive it (ii) there is no person competent to alienate the land and (iii) there is dispute as to the title to receive compensation or as to the apportionment of it. If due to any of the contingencies contemplated in Section 31(2), the Collector is prevented from making payment of compensation to the persons interested who are entitled to compensation, then the Collector is required to deposit the compensation in the court to which reference under Section 18 may be made.

15. Simply put, Section 31 of the 1894 Act makes provision for payment of compensation or deposit of the same in the court. This provision requires that the Collector should tender payment of compensation as awarded by him to the persons interested who are entitled to compensation. If due

to happening of any contingency as contemplated in Section 31(2), the compensation has not been paid, the Collector should deposit the amount of compensation in the court to which reference can be made under Section 18.

16. The mandatory nature of the provision in Section 31(2) with regard to deposit of the compensation in the court is further fortified by the provisions contained in Sections 32, 33 and 34. As a matter of fact, Section 33 gives power to the court, on an application by a person interested or claiming an interest in such money, to pass an order to invest the amount so deposited in such government or other approved securities and may direct the interest or other proceeds of any such investment to be accumulated and paid in such manner as it may consider proper so that the parties interested therein may have the benefit therefrom as they might have had from the land in respect whereof such money shall have been deposited or as near thereto as may be.

17. While enacting Section 24(2), Parliament definitely had in its view Section 31 of the 1894 Act. From that one thing is clear that it did not intend to equate the word “paid” to “offered” or “tendered”. But at the same time, we do not think that by use of the word “paid”, Parliament intended receipt of compensation by the landowners/persons interested. In our view, it is not appropriate to give a literal construction to the expression “paid” used in this sub-section (sub-section (2) of Section 24). If a literal construction were to be given, then it would amount to ignoring procedure, mode and manner of deposit provided in Section 31(2) of the 1894 Act in the event of happening of any of the contingencies contemplated therein which may prevent the Collector from making actual payment of compensation. We are of the view, therefore, that for the purposes of Section 24(2), the compensation shall be regarded as “paid” if the compensation has been offered to the person interested and such compensation has been deposited in the court where reference under Section 18 can be made on happening of any of the contingencies contemplated under Section 31(2) of the 1894 Act. In other

words, the compensation may be said to have been “paid” within the meaning of Section 24(2) when the Collector (or for that matter Land Acquisition Officer) has discharged his obligation and deposited the amount of compensation in court and made that amount available to the interested person to be dealt with as provided in Sections 32 and 33.

18. 1894 Act being an expropriatory legislation has to be strictly followed. The procedure, mode and manner for payment of compensation are prescribed in Part V (Sections 31-34) of the 1894 Act. The Collector, with regard to the payment of compensation, can only act in the manner so provided. It is settled proposition of law (classic statement of Lord Roche in *Nazir Ahmad*[1]) that where a power is given to do a certain thing in a certain way, the thing must be done in that way or not at all. Other methods of performance are necessarily forbidden.

19. Now, this is admitted position that award was made on 31.01.2008. Notices were issued to the landowners to receive the compensation and since they did not receive the compensation, the amount (Rs.27 crores) was deposited in the government treasury. Can it be said that deposit of the amount of compensation in the government treasury is equivalent to the amount of compensation paid to the landowners/persons interested? We do not think so. In a comparatively recent decision, this Court in *Agnelo Santimano Fernandes*[2], relying upon the earlier decision in *Prem Nath Kapur*[3], has held that the deposit of the amount of the compensation in the state’s revenue account is of no avail and the liability of the state to pay interest subsists till the amount has not been deposited in court.

20. From the above, it is clear that the award pertaining to the subject land has been made by the Special Land Acquisition Officer more than five years prior to the commencement of the 2013 Act. It is also admitted position that compensation so awarded has neither been paid to the landowners/persons interested nor deposited in the court. The deposit of compensation amount in the government treasury is of no avail and cannot be held to be equivalent to

compensation paid to the landowners/persons interested. We have, therefore, no hesitation in holding that the subject land acquisition proceedings shall be deemed to have lapsed under Section 24(2) of the 2013 Act.”

6. Having regard to the submissions made, stand taken by the LAC in the counter affidavit and taking into consideration that the counter affidavit is silent whether Sagan or his legal heirs refused to accept compensation or if on account of a dispute the amount of compensation could not be tendered, we are of the considered view that the necessary ingredients for the application of Section 24(2) of the 2013 Act as has been interpreted by the Supreme Court of India and this Court stand satisfied.
7. Since, the award having been announced more than five years prior to the commencement of the 2013 Act, the petitioner is entitled to declaration that the acquisition proceedings in respect of the subject land as described above i.e. 1/6th share of Shri Sagan is deemed to have lapsed. It is ordered accordingly. The question of title is kept open.
8. The writ petition stands disposed of.

CM No.4557/2015 (stay)

The application stands disposed of, in view of order passed in the writ petition.

G.S.SISTANI, J.

SANGITA DHINGRA SEHGAL, J

FEBRUARY 06, 2018/ssc