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IN THE HIGH COURT OF DELHI AT NEW DELHI

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W.P. (C) 619/2018

SH. RAVI GOYAL

..... Petitioner

Through: Mr Rakesh Kumar, Advocate.

versus

UNION OF INDIA & ORS.

..... Respondents

Through: Ms. Anju Gupta & Mr. Roshan Lal
Goel for UOI.

Mr Mohit Chuadhary & Ms. Srishti
Gupta, Advocate for LAC/L&B

Mr Sanjeev Kumar Singh, Advocate
for Respondent/DDA.

Ms. Kanika Agnihotri & Mr. Bhriгу
Dhami for DJB.

CORAM:

JUSTICE S.MURALIDHAR

JUSTICE SANJEEV NARULA

ORDER

19.02.2019

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1. The prayers in the present petition read as under:

“In view of the aforesaid facts and circumstances, it is therefore most respectfully prayed that this Hon'ble Court may graciously be pleased to:-

i) Issue a writ of Certiorari thereby quashing the impugned Award No.39/1980-81 Dt.09.07.1980 DC(E) Delhi passed by Land Acquisition Collector, Under Section 11 of the Land Acquisition Act qua the petitioner's land of area measuring 6 Bigha, Khasra No. 1/117/2, situated in the Revenue Estate of Village Ziauddinpur ,now known as Gokulpuri, Ilacqua- Shahadra, delhi 110094 , as shown in red colour In the site plan., being lapsed under section 24 (2) of "The Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency In Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013;

ii) Declare the said Notification Under Section 4 of the Land Acquisition Act passed vide Reference No.F4(14)/65/L&H dated 06/03/1965 as well as Notification Under Section 6 of the Land Acquisition Act passed vide Reference No.F4(14) (65/L&H dated 07/01/1969 in respect of the said land of the petitioner of area measuring 6 Bigha, Khasra No. 1/117/2 situated in the Revenue Estate of Village Ziauddinpur, now known as Gokulpuri, Ilaqua-Shahadra, Delhi-110094 as null and void being lapsed under Section 24(2) of Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013;

iii) issue a Writ of mandamus thereby directing the respondents to hand over the peaceful and vacant possession of the land measuring 6 Bigha out of khashra No. 1/117/2, situated at Village Ziauddinpur, now known as Gokulpuri, Ilaqua Sahadra, Delhi-11094 as shown in Red Colour in the site plan and the petitioner be put in possession of the said property; or in the alternative direct the respondent to pay appropriate compensation, as per the present market rate of the land of the petitioner along with interest.

iv) award the costs of the present proceeding in favour of the petitioner and against the respondents; Any other relief/orcler(s) which this Hon'ble Court may deem fit or proper in view of the facts and circumstances of the present petition, may also be passed/awarded in favour of the petitioner and against the respondents.

It is, Prayed accordingly.”

2. According to the narration in the petition, it is seen that notification under Section 4 of the Land Acquisition Act, 1984 ('LAA') was issued on 6th March 1965 followed by declaration under Section 6 LAA on 7th January 1969. The Award No. 39/1980-81 was passed on 9th July 1980.

3. The fact remains that the Petitioners have no explanation to offer for the

inordinate delay in approaching the Court for the relief.

4. On the aspect of laches, in *Mahavir v. Union of India (2018) 3 SCC 588* the Supreme Court has observed as under:

“23. In the instant case, the claim has been made not only belatedly, but neither the petitioners nor their previous three generations had ever approached any of the authorities in writing for claiming compensation. No representation had ever been filed with any authority, none has been annexed and there is no averment made in the petition that any such representation had ever been filed. The claim appears not only stale and dead but extremely clouded. This we are mentioning as additional reasons, as such claims not only suffer from delay and laches but courts are not supposed to entertain such claims. Besides such claims become doubtful, cannot be received for consideration being barred due to delay and laches.

24. The High Court has rightly observed that such claims cannot be permitted to be raised in the court, and cannot be adjudicated as they are barred. The High Court has rightly observed that such claims cannot be a subject matter of inquiry after the lapse of a reasonable period of time and beneficial provisions of Section 24 of the 2013 Act are not available to such incumbents. In our opinion, Section 24 cannot revive those claims that are dead and stale.”

5. The above decision has been re-affirmed by the judgment of a three Judge Bench of the Supreme Court in *Indore Development Authority v. Shailendra (2018) 3 SCC 412* where it was observed as under:-

“128. In our considered opinion section 24 cannot be used to revive the dead or stale claims and the matters, which have been contested up to this Court or even in the High Court having lost the cases or where reference has been sought for enhancement of the compensation. Compensation obtained and still it is urged that physical possession has not been taken from them, such claims cannot be entertained under the guise of section 24(2). We have come across the cases in which findings have been recorded that

by which of drawing a Panchnama, possession has been taken, now again under Section 24(2) it is asserted again that physical possession is still with them. Such claims cannot be entertained in view of the previous decisions in which such plea ought to have been raised and such decisions would operate as res judicata or constructive res judicata. As either the plea raised is negated or such plea ought to have been raised or was not raised in the previous round of litigation. Section 24 of the Act of 2013 does not supersede or annul the court's decision and the provisions cannot be misused to reassert such claims once over again. Once Panchnama has been drawn and by way of drawing the Panchnama physical possession has been taken, the case cannot be reopened under the guise of section 24 of Act of 2013.

129. Section 24 is not intended to come to the aid of those who first deliberately refuse to accept the compensation, and then indulge in ill-advised litigation, and often ill-motivated dilatory tactics, for decades together. On the contrary, the section is intended to help those who have not been offered or paid the compensation despite it being the legal obligation of the acquiring body so to do, and/or who have been illegally deprived of their possession for five years or more; in both the scenarios, fault/cause not being attributable to the landowners/claimants.

130. We are of the view that stale or dead claims cannot be the subject-matter of judicial probing under section 24 of the Act of 2013. The provisions of section 24 do not invalidate those judgment/orders of the courts where under rights/claims have been lost/negated, neither do they revive those rights which have come barred, either due to inaction or otherwise by operation of law. Fraudulent and stale claims are not at all to be raised under the guise of section 24. Misuse of provisions of section 24(2) cannot be permitted. Protection by the courts in cases of such blatant misuse of the provisions of law could never have been the intention behind enacting the provisions of section 24 (2) of the 2013 Act; and, by the decision laid down in *Pune Municipal Corporation (supra)*, and this Court never, even for a moment, intended that such cases would be received or entertained by the courts.”

6. The above observations have been followed by this Court in several orders including the order dated 10th January, 2019 in WP(C) No. 4528/2015 (*Mool Chand v. Union of India*) and similar petitions have been dismissed on the ground of laches.

7. For the aforementioned reasons, the writ petition is dismissed on the ground of laches.

S. MURALIDHAR, J.

SANJEEV NARULA, J.

FEBRUARY 19, 2019