

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT BOMBAY
CIVIL APPELLATE JURISDICTION
WRIT PETITION NO.2143 OF 2021

Ajay Sitaram Yadav & Ors. ... Petitioners

Versus

The State of Maharashtra & Ors. ... Respondents

Mr.N.V.Walawalkar, Sr. Adv. a/w. Mr. S.M.Sabrad, Mr. A.C.Sawant, Ms.N.R.Parte for the Petitioners.

Mr.P.G.Sawant, AGP for the State.

CORAM : S.J. KATHAWALLA, &
MILIND N. JADHAV, JJ.

DATE : 24TH JUNE, 2021

(THROUGH VIDEO CONFERENCING)

P.C. :

1. By the above Writ Petition, the Petitioners have interalia sought the following relief :

“(b) that by an appropriate writ, order or direction, this Hon’ble Court be pleased to direct the Respondent Nos.1, 2 and 4 to afford an opportunity of hearing to the Petitioners prior to taking any decision on such application being filed by Respondent Nos.6 to 16 with a prayer to set aside the order dated 31.3.2011 granting prior approval under Section 36A of the Maharashtra Land Revenue Code in favour of the Petitioners and further be pleased to direct the Respondent Nos.1 and 2 not to give effect to any order being passed for a period of three

weeks from the date of receipt, if the same is adverse to the Petitioners.

2. The Learned Senior Advocate for the Petitioners has interalia submitted as under :
 - 2.1. That Respondent Nos. 6 to 16 are the owners of the land bearing Survey No. 45/2/A/1 admeasuring 1 Hectare 1 Are, situated at Mouje Valshind, Taluka – Bhiwandi and District Thane (**the said land**).
 - 2.2. That Respondent Nos. 6 to 16 being tribals are required to obtain prior permission from the concerned authorities under Sections 36 and 36A of the Maharashtra Land Revenue Code, 1966 (**the Code**) before selling the said land.
 - 2.3. That since Respondent Nos. 6 to 16 were in dire need of money, they approached the Petitioners with their offer to sell the said land. The Petitioners showed their willingness to purchase the said land. Thereupon, a formal agreement between the Petitioners and Respondent Nos. 6 to 16 was executed in respect of the said land.
 - 2.4. That thereafter the Petitioners filed an Application before the Collector, District Thane seeking sanction for sale of the said land under Sections 36 and 36A of the Act.
 - 2.5. That upon receipt of the said Application, the Collector, District Thane forwarded the same to the Tahsildar, Bhiwandi, Taluka Bhiwandi, District

Thane to make necessary enquiries as per the prevalent rules.

- 2.6. That after making enquiries, the Collector, District Thane forwarded his report to the Additional Commissioner, Konkan Division, Navi Mumbai, who forwarded his report to the Minister, Revenue and Forest Department, Mantralaya, Mumbai.
- 2.7. That on 31st March, 2011, the Minister, Revenue and Forest Department, granted permission to the Petitioners as provided under Section 36A of the Act.
- 2.8. That thereafter on 11th May, 2011, Respondent No. 3 and the Divisional Commissioner, Konkan Division, Navi Mumbai forwarded its letter enclosing the copy of the Order dated 31st March, 2011 passed by the Minister, Revenue and Forest Department to the Collector, District Thane with a further direction to grant permission to sell the said land.
- 2.9. That the Petitioners thereafter approached Respondent Nos. 6 to 16 and informed them about the permission being granted and requested them to complete the procedure on their part.
- 2.10. That Respondent Nos. 6 to 16 informed the Petitioners that there were certain disputes interse between them and once the same is sorted out, Respondent Nos. 6 to 16 would get back to the Petitioners and complete the necessary procedure.
- 2.11. That Respondent Nos. 6 to 16 contacted the Petitioners in the year 2018

and informed them that the interse disputes between them were resolved and they were ready and willing to perform the duties on their part to complete the transaction. Accordingly, the Respondent Nos. 6 to 16 recorded their statement before the Tahsildar, Bhiwandi.

2.12. That Respondent Nos. 6 to 16 in their statements confirmed that they have received the entire amount / consideration from the Petitioners and in view of the interse disputes between them there was delay on their part to complete the transaction and that they would not become landless pursuant to the said land being sold by them to the Petitioners. Accordingly, the Tahsildar, Bhiwandi, vide his letter dated 31st December, 2018, forwarded his report to the Collector, District Thane.

2.13. That on 4th February, 2019, the Collector, District Thane vide his Order granted permission for sale of the said land in favour of the Petitioners on the terms and conditions mentioned therein. In the said letter, it is specifically mentioned / recorded that since there were interse disputes between the Respondent Nos. 6 to 16, further steps for completing the process of sale was stalled and the said dispute between them has been resolved. It was also recorded / mentioned in the said letter that the entire amount / consideration mentioned in the order is already received by Respondent Nos. 6 to 16.

2.14. That thereafter on 24th December, 2019, the Collector, District Thane

issued a letter to the Tahsildar, Bhiwandi for making necessary compliance under Section 43 of the Tenancy Act i.e. for payment of the amount of Nazrana. Accordingly, the Petitioners made necessary payments towards Nazrana.

- 2.15. That after payment of Nazrana, the entire procedure except registering the Sale Deed by the Respondent Nos. 6 to 16 was completed. The Petitioners on several occasions contacted the Respondent Nos. 6 to 16 for executing the Sale Deed. However, they expressed their inability to execute the same due to the pandemic.
- 2.16. That after the lockdown was lifted, the Petitioners renewed their request for registering the Sale Deed. However, Respondent Nos. 6 to 16 gave evasive replies to the Petitioner.
- 2.17. That Petitioner came to know about the negotiations being held between the Respondent Nos.6 to 16 and the close relative of Respondent No.2.
- 2.18. That on 3rd May, 2021, the Petitioners made a representation to the Collector, District Thane recording their objections to the Application if made by the Respondent Nos. 6 to 16. On 11th May, 2021, the Petitioners also submitted representation to Respondent Nos. 1 and 2 inter alia setting out the aforestated facts.
- 2.19. That only to create evidence against the Petitioners, the Respondent Nos. 6 to 16 would be made to give an Application to the Collector, District Thane,

for cancelling the prior approval granted by the Respondent Nos. 1 and 2 and without affording the Petitioners any opportunity, the Respondent No.4 would straightway forward a report to Respondent Nos. 1 and 2.

2.20. That the Petitioners apprehend that though they have made application before the Respondent Nos. 1, 2 and 4, no opportunity of hearing would be given to the Petitioners and the Respondent Nos.1, 2 and 4 would flout the principles of natural justice and cancel the prior approval granted on 31st March, 2011.

2.21. That the Petitioners have therefore moved this Court seeking relief which is reproduced in paragraph 1 above.

3. Without commenting on the allegations made by the Petitioners against the Respondents in the above Writ Petition, some of which are set out hereinabove, we are of the view that the Petitioners are certainly entitled to a hearing before the Respondents take any decision on such application made by Respondent Nos.6 to 16 to set aside the Order dated 31st March, 2011 granting prior approval under Section 36A of the Code in favour of the Petitioners. We are also of the view that if any order is passed by Respondent Nos. 1 and 2 against the Petitioners including setting aside the Order dated 31st March, 2011, the Respondents shall not act on the same for a period of three weeks from the date of serving of such order/decision on the Petitioners and/or their Advocates.

4. The above Writ Petition is accordingly disposed off.
5. All contentions of the parties are kept open.

(MILIND N. JADHAV, J.)

(S.J. KATHAWALLA, J.)