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W.P.A. 477 of 2022

Jogendra Barman
Vs.
State of W.B. & Ors.

Mr. Mir Anowar
...for the petitioner.

Mr. Soumitra Bandyopadhyay
Mr. Subhasish Bandyopadhyay
...for the State.

Mr. Sanjay Saha ... for the WBMDTC

Affidavit of service filed by the petitioner be taken on record.

The petitioner submits that long-term mining lease was granted in his favour for a period of five years by virtue of registered deed dated 15th April, 2016 and the term of the lease has expired on 14th April, 2021. Due to Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown declared by the Government, the petitioner was unable to carry on mining operation for substantial period of time for which he has prayed for extension of the period of lease before the concerned authority.

Learned counsel draws the attention of the court to Clause 5 of part IX of the deed of lease which states that in

the event of delay on the ground of force majeure the period of such delay shall be added to the period of lease. Learned counsel has also drawn the attention of this Court to the Memorandum dated 13th May, 2020 issued by the Deputy Secretary, Government of India to the Secretaries of all Central Government Ministries/Departments which demonstrates that in view of the restrictions placed on the movement of goods, services and manpower on account of the lock down situation, dates for completion of contractual obligations which had to be completed on or after 20th February, 2020 shall stand extended for a period not less than three months and not more than six months. Learned counsel for the petitioner also places reliance on a notification issued by the Government of West Bengal on 28th February, 2022 extending all sand mining leases expiring till April, 2022 up to 31st May, 2022. The petitioner submitted a representation before the concerned Authority on 1st February, 2021 in this regard which is yet to be disposed by the Authority. The petitioner prays for a direction upon the Authority to consider the representation at the earliest.

It is submitted on behalf of the State respondents that the 3rd respondent be directed to consider the representation within a stipulated period of time.

Upon consideration of the submissions made on behalf of the parties and material on record, the writ petition is disposed of directing the 3rd respondent to consider and dispose of the representation submitted by the petitioner dated 1st February, 2021 within a period of one month from the date of communication of this order after taking into consideration the Memorandum dated 13th May, 2020 and 28th February, 2022 as well as clause 5 of part IX of the deed of lease and after affording reasonable opportunity of hearing to all the interested parties including the petitioner, in accordance with law.

With the above directions, the writ petition being W.P.A. 477 of 2022 is thus disposed of. However, there shall be no order as to costs.

Since no affidavit is invited, the allegations contained in the petition are deemed not to be admitted.

Urgent certified website copy of this order, if applied for, be supplied to the parties upon compliance with all requisite formalities.

(Suvra Ghosh, J.)