

15.03.2022
rc/ct.no.10
Item No.08

WPA No. 2761 of 2022
Debranjana Hazra
Versus
The State of West Bengal & Ors.

Mr. Mir Anowar ...for the petitioner

Mr. Chandi Charan De
Mr. Somnath Mukhopadhyay ...for the State

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 8th December, 2016 and the term of the lease is due to expire on 7th December, 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 draws the attention of the Court to a notification issued by the Government of West Bengal on 28th February, 2022 which records that all sand mining leases expiring till April, 2022 are extended till 31st May, 2022. The petitioner submitted a representation before the concerned Authority on 7th January, 2022 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.

It is submitted by the learned counsel appearing on behalf of the State-respondents that the representation submitted by the petitioner is under consideration.

In view of the above, this Court is inclined to hold that as the representation submitted by the petitioner has already been taken up for consideration by the authority, such exercise be completed within one month

from the date of communication of this order after taking into consideration the Memorandums dated 13th May, 2020 and February 28, 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, W.P.A. 2761 of 2022 is 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)