

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

DATED : 14.06.2022

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THE HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE M.DHANDAPANI

W.P. No.22578 of 2015
and
M.P.nos.1 & 2 of 2015

Dr.T.Deenadayalan

..Petitioner

Vs.

1. The Secretary to Government
Industries Department,
Secretariat, Chennai-9.
2. The special Tahsildar,
Land Acquisition VI,
Aromatic Complex MRL Project,
No.4, Genis Road,
Saidapet, Chennai-15.
3. Chennai Petroleum Corporation Ltd.,
Rep. By its Managing Director,
536, Anna Salai, Chennai-18.
4. SPIC Petro Chemicals Limited,
A Company in liquidation,
Represented by the Official Liquidator,
High Court, Madras,
Corporate Bhavan, Second Floor,
No.29, Rajaji Salai, Chennai-1.

..Respondents

Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India, for issuance of Writs of Certiorarified Mandamus to call for the record of the 1st respondents notification U/s 4(1) of land acquisition Act in G.O.Ms.1402 Industries (MID I) dated 4.12.1990 published in Tamilnadu Government gazette dated 19.12.1990 and quash the same as illegal in so far as the petitioners land is concerned and also declare that the notification U/s 4(1) of land acquisition Act against petitioners as lapsed as per section 24 (2) of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in land Acquisition Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act 2013 Act 30 of 2013 and direct the 1st and 2nd respondent to restore the name of the

petitioner in all the revenue record pertaining to survey No.174/1B in Mathur Village presently Madhavaram Taluk, measuring 6820 Sq.ft land.

For Petitioner : Mr.S.Packiaraj

For Respondents : Mr. Yogesh Kannadasan, SGP RR1 & 2
Mr.B.Gowtham, R3
for M/s.Dua Associates

O R D E R

This petition has been filed seeking to quash the notification u/s 4(1) of land acquisition Act in G.O.Ms.1402 Industries (MID I) dated 4.12.1990 published in Tamilnadu Government gazette dated 19.12.1990 issued by the first respondent and also declare that the notification U/s 4(1) of land acquisition Act against petitioners as lapsed as per section 24 (2) of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in land Acquisition Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act 2013 Act 30 of 2013 and direct the 1st and 2nd respondent to restore the name of the petitioner in all the revenue record pertaining to survey No.174/1B in Mathur Village presently Madhavaram Taluk.

2.Heard, the learned counsel for the petitioner, the learned Government Advocate appearing for the respondents.

3.The case of the petitioner is that the petitioner is the owner of the property in S.No.174/1B measuring to an extent of 6480 sq. ft situated in Mathur Village. The first respondent had issued a notification dated 19.12.1990 under Section 4(1) of the Land Acquisition Act 1894 vide G.O.Ms.No.1402 Industries (MIA) Department dated 04.01.1990 for acquiring lands for Industrial purpose and the same was also published in the gazette. The Government of Tamil Nadu initiated land acquisition proceedings including the subject land under Land Acquisition Act, 1894. An award was passed in the year 1994 and even after passing an award, the possession was not taken and the compensation amount was not deposited to the petitioner.

4.According to the petitioner, admittedly, the respondents have not taken any steps to implement the project in the lands subject matter of the acquisition. Till date, the possession of the subject land has not been taken and the same still remains with the petitioner and no compensation amount has been paid to the petitioner. Therefore, the land acquisition proceedings initiated under the Central Act 1894 have been lapsed in view of the non compliance of Section 24(2) of Right to Fair

Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition and Re-settlement Act 2013. Therefore, the petitioner made a representation to the respondents to drop the acquisition proceedings. Till date, no action was taken, hence, the present writ petition has been filed before this Court seeking appropriate remedy.

5. When the matter is taken up for hearing, it is brought to the notice of this Court that issue raised in this writ petition is no longer res integra as the same stands settled by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in Indore Development Authority Vs. Manoharlal and ors etc., (2020 SCC Online SC 316), wherein, the Apex Court held as follows:-

''374. Before proceeding further, in our opinion, Section 24 contemplates pending proceedings and not the concluded ones in which possession has been taken, and compensation has been paid or deposited. Section 24 does not provide an arm or tool to question the legality of proceedings, which have been undertaken under the Act of 1894 and stood concluded before five years or more. It is only in cases where possession has not been taken, nor compensation is paid, that there is a lapse. In case possession has been taken, and compensation has not been deposited with respect to majority of landholdings, the beneficial provision of the statute provides that all beneficiaries shall be paid compensation as admissible under the Act of 2013. The beneficiaries, i.e., landowners contemplated under the proviso to Section 24 (2), are the ones who were so recorded as beneficiaries as on the date of issuance of notification under Section 4 of the Act of 1894. 227 (2006) 3 SCC 286 The provision is not meant to be invoked on the basis of void transactions, and by the persons who have purchased on the basis of power of attorney or otherwise, they cannot claim the benefit under Section 24 as is apparent from proviso to Section 24 (2) and the decision in Shiv Kumar & Ors. v. Union of India and Ors.''

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402. In view of the aforesaid discussion, we answer the questions as under:

1. Under the provisions of Section 24(1)(a) in case the award is not made as on 1.1.2014

the date of commencement of Act of 2013, there is no lapse of proceedings. Compensation has to be determined under the provisions of Act of 2013.

2. In case the award has been passed within the window period of five years excluding the period covered by an interim order of the court, then proceedings shall continue as provided under Section 24(1)(b) of the Act of 2013 under the Act of 1894 as if it has not been repealed.

3. The word or used in Section 24(2) between possession and compensation has to be read as nor or as and. The deemed lapse of land acquisition proceedings under Section 24(2) of the Act of 2013 takes place where due to inaction of authorities for five years or more prior to commencement of the said Act, the possession of land has not been taken nor compensation has been paid. In other words, in case possession has been taken, compensation has not been paid then there is no lapse. Similarly, if compensation has been paid, possession has not been taken then there is no lapse.

4. The expression 'paid' in the main part of Section 24(2) of the Act of 2013 does not include a deposit of compensation in court. The consequence of non-deposit is provided in proviso to Section 24(2) in case it has not been deposited with respect to majority of land holdings then all beneficiaries (landowners) as on the date of notification for land acquisition under Section 4 of the Act of 1894 shall be entitled to compensation in accordance with the provisions of the Act of 2013. In case the obligation under Section 31 of the Land Acquisition Act of 1894 has not been fulfilled, interest under Section 34 of the said Act can be granted. Non-deposit of compensation (in court) does not result in the lapse of land acquisition proceedings. In case of non-deposit with respect to the majority of holdings for five years or more, compensation under the Act of 2013 has to be paid to the "landowners" as on the date of notification for land acquisition under Section 4 of the Act of 1894.

5. In case a person has been tendered the compensation as provided under Section 31(1) of the Act of 1894, it is not open to him to claim

that acquisition has lapsed under Section 24(2) due to non-payment or non-deposit of compensation in court. The obligation to pay is complete by tendering the amount under Section 31(1). Land owners who had refused to accept compensation or who sought reference for higher compensation, cannot claim that the acquisition proceedings had lapsed under Section 24(2) of the Act of 2013.

6. The proviso to Section 24(2) of the Act of 2013 is to be treated as part of Section 24(2) not part of Section 24(1)(b).

7. The mode of taking possession under the Act of 1894 and as contemplated under Section 24(2) is by drawing of inquest report/memorandum. Once award has been passed on taking possession under Section 16 of the Act of 1894, the land vests in State there is no divesting provided under Section 24(2) of the Act of 2013, as once possession has been taken there is no lapse under Section 24(2).

8. The provisions of Section 24(2) providing for a deemed lapse of proceedings are applicable in case authorities have failed due to their inaction to take possession and pay compensation for five years or more before the Act of 2013 came into force, in a proceeding for land acquisition pending with concerned authority as on 1.1.2014. The period of subsistence of interim orders passed by court has to be excluded in the computation of five years.

9. Section 24(2) of the Act of 2013 does not give rise to new cause of action to question the legality of concluded proceedings of land acquisition. Section 24 applies to a proceeding pending on the date of enforcement of the Act of 2013, i.e., 1.1.2014. It does not revive stale and time-barred claims and does not reopen concluded proceedings nor allow landowners to question the legality of mode of taking possession to reopen proceedings or mode of deposit of compensation in the treasury instead of court to invalidate acquisition."

6. From the above, it is evident that the Hon'ble Supreme Court has settled all the issues, including the grounds raised by the petitioner. That apart, the acquisition proceedings have been completed and the subject land was taken over by the government and the same was handed over to the requisitioning

body. Further the requisitioning body also deposited the compensation as awarded by the Land Acquisition Officer. Therefore, the petitioner failed to satisfy the twin requirements under Section 24 (2) of the Act, i.e., the physical possession of the land was not taken and the compensation has not been paid/tendered/deposited in accordance with law. In view of the dictum laid down by the Hon'ble Supreme Court, the issues raised by the petitioner having been settled, the acquisition proceedings have not lapsed by operation of law under Section 24 (2) of the new Act i.e., Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013. In view of the settled position of law, the writ petition is devoid of merits and is liable to be dismissed.

7. Accordingly, the writ petition is dismissed. There shall be no order as to costs. Consequently, connected miscellaneous petitions are also closed.

Sd/-
Assistant Registrar(CO)

//True Copy//

Sub Assistant Registrar

Rli

To

1. The Secretary to Government
Industries Department,
Secretariat, Chennai-9.
2. The special Tahsildar,
Land Acquisition VI,
Aromatic Complex MRL Project,
No.4, Genis Road,
Saidapet, Chennai-15.

+2cc to Mr.S.Packiaraj, Advocate, S.R.No.34976
+1cc to Mr.S.Arjun Suresh, Advocate, S.R.No.35490
+1cc to the Government Pleader, S.R.No.36205

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MG(CO)
RGA(11/07/2022)