IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT PATNA
Civil Writ Jurisdiction Case No.530 of 2023

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M/S Maa Kamakhya Construction through its Proprietor Biswajeet Kumar, male aged about 37 years, son of Sri Shankar Jha, having its registered office at- Gauripur Parsha, Badhara Khothi Purnea District- Purnea, resident of- In Front of Mahila Collage Purniya Dollar House Chok Purnea, District Purnea-854301, Bihar.

... ... Petitioner/s

Versus

1. The Union of India through the Secretary, Ministry of Finance (Department of Revenue), Government of India, New Delhi.
2. The Under Secretary, Ministry of Finance (Department of Revenue), Government of India, New Delhi.
3. The State of Bihar through the Chief Secretary, Government of Bihar, Patna.
4. The Principal Secretary, Department of Finance, Government of Bihar, Patna.
5. The Joint Commissioner State Tax (J.C.S.T.) Purnea Circle Purnea- 854301.
6. The Assistant Commissioner State Tax, Purnea Circle, Purnea.

... ... Respondent/s

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Appearance :
For the Petitioner/s : Mr.Uday Prasad Singh, Advocate
For the Respondent/s : Dr. K.N. Singh (ASG)
Mr. Anshuman Singh, Sr. SC, CGST & CX
Mr. Vikash Kumar, SC-11

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CORAM: HONOURABLE THE CHIEF JUSTICE
and
HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE PARTHA SARTHY
ORAL JUDGMENT
(Per: HONOURABLE THE CHIEF JUSTICE)

(The proceedings of the Court are being conducted by Hon'ble the Chief Justice/ Hon'ble Judges through Video Conferencing from their residential offices/residences. Also, the Advocates and the Staffs joined the proceedings through Video Conferencing from their residences/offices.)

Date : 20-01-2023

Heard learned counsel for the parties.

Petitioner has prayed for the following relief(s):-

A) For issuance of appropriate writ, rule or direction nature of certiorari for quashing the order dated 19.10.2022 passed by the respondents authorities by which the appeal filed vide Appeal No. ARN-AD10092200806H by the petitioner for setting aside the order of demand Letter /demand Notices dated 01.02.2021 vide reference o. ZD100221000701M which was communicated though e mail on its GST PORTAL.

B) For issuance of direction to the respondents authorities to consider the appeal filed by the petitioner and set aside the order dated 01.02.2021 by which the petitioner has been directed to pay the Letter/demand Notices dated 01.02.2021 vide reference No. ZD100221000701M, which by the petitioner has been directed to pay Total CGST/SGST Tax amount of Rs. 1,34,29,565/- plus interest applicable as per under section 73(1) for the period Financial Year 2019-20, without providing adequate opportunity for hearing as well as without accepting the Govt. portal document which has been extract from its portal.

C) For grant of relief or reliefs as the petitioner is found entitled.

It is brought to our notice that vide impugned order dated 19.10.2022 passed by the Additional Commissioner of State Taxes (Appeals), Purnea Division, Purnea, in Appeal No.(ARN) AD100922002806H, the appeal of the petitioner against the order dated 01.02.2021 passed by Respondent No. 7, namely The Assistant Commissioner of State Tax, Purnea Circle, Purnea, for the period 01.04.2019 to 31.03.2020, has been rejected on the ground of the same being barred by limitation.

Learned counsel for the Revenue, states that he has no objection if the matter is remanded to the Assessing Authority for deciding the case afresh and the limitation shall not be allowed to come in the way. Also, the case shall be decided on merits. Also, during pendency of the case, no coercive steps shall be taken against the petitioner.

Statement accepted and taken on record.

However, having heard learned counsel for the parties as also perused the record made available, we are of the considered view that this Court, notwithstanding the statutory remedy, is not precluded from interfering where, *ex facie*, we form an opinion that the order is bad in law. This we say so, for two reasons- (a) violation of principles of natural justice, i.e. Fair opportunity of hearing. No sufficient time was afforded to the petitioner to represent his case; (b) order passed *ex parte* in nature, does not assign any sufficient reasons even decipherable from the record, as to how the officer could determine the amount due and payable by the assessee. The order, *ex parte* in nature, passed in violation of the principles of natural justice, entails civil consequences; (c) We also find the authorities not to have adjudicated the matter on the attending facts and circumstances. All issues of fact and law ought to have been dealt with, even if the proceedings were ex parte in nature.

As such, on this short ground alone, we dispose of the present writ petition in the following mutually agreeable terms:

(a) We quash and set aside the impugned order dated 19.10.2022 passed by the Additional Commissioner of State Taxes (Appeals), Purnea Division, Purnea, in Appeal No. (ARN) AD100922002806H, and the order dated 01.02.2021 passed by Respondent No. 7, namely The Assistant Commissioner of State Tax, Purnea Circle, Purnea;

(b) We accept the statement of the petitioner that ten per cent of the total amount, being condition prerequisite for hearing of the appeal, already stands deposited. If that were so, well and good. However, if the amount is not deposited for whatever reason(s), same shall be done before the next date;

(c) Further the petitioner undertakes to additionally deposit ten per cent of the amount of the demand raised before the Assessing Officer. This shall be done within four weeks.

(d) This deposit shall be without prejudice to the respective rights and contention of the parties and subject to the order passed by the Assessing Officer. However, if it is ultimately found that the petitioner's deposit is in excess, the same shall be refunded within two months from the date of passing of the order;

(e) We also direct for de-freezing/de-attaching of the bank account(s) of the writ-petitioner, if attached in reference to the proceedings, subject matter of present petition. This shall be done immediately.

(f) Petitioner undertakes to appear before the Assessing Authority on 06.02.2023 at 10:30 A.M., if possible through digital mode;

(g) The Assessing Authority shall decide the case on merits after complying with the principles of natural justice;

(h) Opportunity of hearing shall be afforded to the parties to place on record all essential documents and materials, if so required and desired;

(i) During pendency of the case, no coercive steps shall be taken against the petitioner.

(j) The Assessing Authority shall pass a fresh order only after affording adequate opportunity to all concerned, including the writ petitioner;

(k) Petitioner through learned counsel undertakes to fully cooperate in such proceedings and not take unnecessary adjournment;

(l) The Assessing Authority shall decide the case on merits expeditiously, preferably within a period of two months from the date of appearance of the petitioner;

(m) The Assessing Authority shall pass a speaking order, assigning reasons, copy whereof shall be supplied to the parties;

(n) Liberty reserved to the petitioner to challenge the order, if required and desired;

(o) Equally, liberty reserved to the parties to take recourse to such other remedies as are otherwise available in accordance with law;

(p) We are hopeful that as and when petitioner takes recourse to such remedies, before the appropriate forum, the same shall be dealt with, in accordance with law, with a reasonable dispatch;

(q) We have not expressed any opinion on merits and all issues are left open;

(r) If possible, proceedings be conducted through digital mode;

The instant petition sands disposed of in the aforesaid terms.

Interlocutory Application(s), if any, also stands disposed of.

Learned counsel for the respondents undertakes to communicate the order to the appropriate authority through electronic mode.

(Sanjay Karol, CJ)

(Partha Sarthy, J)

Rajiv/-K.C.Jha

AFR/NAFR	
CAV DATE	
Uploading Date	
Transmission Date	