

Pala Singh (Deceased) By Lrs

Vs

Union of India and Others

Civil Appeal No. 1088 (N) of 1969

(A. P. Sen, B. C. Ray JJ)

22.07.1987

JUDGMENT

B. C. RAY, J. –

1. This is an appeal by special leave against the judgment and order made in L.P.A. Number 95 of 1964 dismissing the appeal holding that the land in question having already vested in the Government of Punjab under package deal, the authority under the Displaced Persons (Compensation and Rehabilitation) Act, 1954 had no jurisdiction over lands in question.
2. Appellant, Pala Singh, a displaced person, was allotted 9 standard acres and 12 1/4 units of land in village Jhill, Tehsil District Patiala in lieu of his land left in Chack No. 204 in 1950. He got the same quantity of land in village Alipur Arain on mutual exchange with an allotted of the said village. The appellant was not allotted any land for the land left by him in village Santpura and Jaffarpur in Tehsil Patiala, District Gujarat. The area of Chack No. 204 R.B. was described as a suburban area by the State Government. The appellant applied of allotment in village Tripari Sayidan, a suburb of Patiala City. After due verification from the records of the Rehabilitation Department at Jullundur, the petitioner being found entitled to the suburban allotment to the tune of 10 standard acres and 2 units as well as a rural allotment of 2 standard acres and 8 units was allotted 6 standard acres 12 3/4 units of land in Tripari Sayidan. Proprietary right in respect of both these allotments, that is, at Tripari Sayidan and village Alipur Arian were granted to him vide sands dated February 17, 1956.
3. In October 1961, it was detected that there was excess allotment of 6 standard acres and 12 3/4 units in village Alipur Arian and accordingly the Managing Officer, Rehabilitation Department by his order dated February 21, 1962 allowed the petitioner to purchase the said excess area. Petitioner deposited the required amount in the Treasury on March 6, 1962. On March 27, 1962, i.e. 20 days thereafter, the petitioner was served with a notice by respondent 3, Assistant Registrar-cum-Managing Officer asking him to appear before respondent 2, the Chief Settlement Commissioner, Civil Secretariat, Jullundur to show cause why the order of the Managing Officer allowing him to purchase the excess land should not be set aside, as it was a case of double allotment. Respondent 2, the Chief Settlement Commissioner, after hearing the petitioner passed an order holding that the excess land which was found in October 1961 could not be sold by the Managing Officer under the Displaced Persons (Compensation and Rehabilitation) Act, 1954, as under the package deal this land had been transferred to the Punjab Government. It was for the Punjab Government to decide if the said land would be sold to the petitioner at the reserve price or not. The reference was accordingly allowed and the order of the Managing Officer allowing the allottee to purchase the said 6.12 3/4 standard acres in village Alipur Arian, Tehsil District Patiala was set aside. The petitioner then made

an application under Section 33 of the said Act to respondent 1, the Central Government against the said order. The said application was dismissed by respondent 1. Against these orders the petitioner moved a petition under Articles 226 and 227 of the Constitution of India before the High Court of Punjab and Haryana under Civil Writ Petition No. 1804 of 1962 on the grounds inter alia that the petitioner is entitled to get the same land as he had already deposited the price of the allotted land in accordance with the order of the Managing Officer. The said purchase could not be cancelled on the plea that the land had already been transferred to Punjab Government by the Central Government under package deal.

4. A return was filed on behalf of the respondents stating inter alia that in lieu of land to the extent of 6.12 3/4 standard acres allotted to him in village Tripari Sayidan, an area to the same extent was to be withdrawn from his rural allotment in village Alipur Arian. This however was not done through oversight and the allottee was in possession of both the lands in villages Alipur Arian and Tripari Sayidan. This resulted in double allotment to the petitioner. It was also submitted therein that the Managing Officer wrongly allowed the petitioner to purchase the said land in village Alipur Arian in February 1962. The order of the Managing Officer was without jurisdiction as by that time property had gone out of the Compensation Pool and it vested in the State Government. It was further averred that the transfer of the land in dispute to the petitioner was void ab initio as under the package deal it vested in the State Government. Respondent 2 has rightly cancelled the allotment of excess land to the petitioner.

5. The writ petition was dismissed by the learned Single Judge holding inter alia the Chief Settlement Commissioner (Land) had jurisdiction to cancel the allotment even after the conferment of the proprietary right referring to the decision in the case of Smt. Balwant Kaur v. Chief Settlement Commissioner (Lands), Punjab ((1963) 65 Punj LR 1141, 1187 (FB)). It was further held that the package deal came about in April 1961 whereas the offer to purchase the excess land was made in February, 1962, i.e. at a time when the land was no longer in the Central Pool but it vested in the State of Punjab. The Chief Settlement Commissioner was justified in cancelling the permission to purchase given by the Managing Officer as the land had already been transferred to the State of Punjab and the same ceased to vest in the Central Compensation Pool.

6. Aggrieved by the judgment and order dated January 16, 1964 passed in C.W.P. No. 1804 of 1962 an appeal under Clause X of the Letters Patent was preferred by the petitioner. This was registered as L.P.A. No. 95 of 1964. On August 14, 1968, the Division Bench of Punjab High Court after hearing the parties held that there was no denial by the appellant that in view of the package deal the title to the land had already passed to the Punjab Government in 1961 and no authority under the Displaced Persons (Compensation and Rehabilitation) Act, 1954 could make any order in regard to the sale of land to the appellant at concessional rate, The title had passed to the Punjab Government in 1961 and after that it was only the Punjab Government who could deal with that land. It was further held that there was no denial that the land in question was covered by the package deal. The only contention made by the appellant was that an appeal was filed in the Supreme Court from the judgment in the case of Ram Chander v. State of Punjab (1968 CLJ (P&H) 668, 673) wherein the validity of the package deal was upheld. It was held that if the appeal succeeds in this Court then it would be up to the Chief Settlement Commissioner to review his own orders in the wake of such decision of the Supreme Court in order to give relief to the appellant. The appeal was accordingly dismissed.

7. It is against this judgment and order this appeal on special leave has been filed.

8. It appears from the letters dated June 3, 1961, March 5, 1962 as well as March 23, 1963 issued from the office of Chief Settlement Commissioner, Government of India that all surplus lands as well as excess area in occupation of the allottees stood transferred to the Punjab Government with effect from April 1, 1961 and the Punjab Government paid the price of the lands at the rate of Rs. 445 per standard acre to the Central Government by half yearly installments in 6 installments within a period of three years commencing from April 1, 1961. So these lands are package deal properties vested in the State of Punjab. It has been rightly held in the Letters Patent Appeal confirming the order of the learned Single Judge in the writ petition that since the excess land allotted to the appellant was package deal property the same Managing Officer under the provisions of Displaced Persons (Compensation and Rehabilitation) Act, 1954. So the order of the Managing Officer made in February 1962 is wholly without jurisdiction inasmuch as the said property was no longer in the Compensation Pool of the Central Government but it was a package deal property vested in the State of Punjab. It has also been rightly held that the Chief Settlement Commissioner is competent under Section 24 of the Displaced Persons (Compensation and Rehabilitation) Act 44 of 1954 to cancel the allotment of land in excess of the area the petitioner is entitled to get under the provisions of the said Act. This legal position has been settled by a decision of the Punjab and Haryana High Court in the case of Ram Chander v. State of Punjab (1968 CLJ (P&H) 668, 673), wherein it has held :

In our opinion, the package deal has the effect of transferring the property from the Central Government to the Punjab State and the logical result which flows from it is that the Settlement Authorities as delegates of the Central Government could not pass any orders under the Act.

9. It appears that the Appeal No. 470 of 1969 which was filed against the judgment and order passed in LPA No. 298 of 1966 was disposed of by this Court (to which of us were parties) on July 29, 1986 by recording the following order :

In view of the judgment in Civil Appeal Nos. 2125(N) of 1968 and 1832 of 1969, there is no reason to consider the question of law raised by the State of Haryana in this appeal. The appeal is accordingly disposed of without expressing any opinion on the merits.

10. It also appears that this Court passed an order on July 29, 1986 dismissing Civil Appeal Nos. 2125(N) of 1968 and 1832 of 1969 by recording the following order :

There is no merit in these appeals. By the judgment, the High Court has set aside the sales and directed re-auction of the properties. We entirely agree with the reasoning and conclusion reached by the High Court. The appeals are accordingly dismissed with no order as to costs.

11. It is therefore clear and evident that the judgment of the Punjab High Court rendered in the case of Ram Chander v. State of Punjab (1968 CLJ (P&H) 668, 673), insofar as it relates to the validity of the package deal, has been upheld by this Court. So there is no merit in this contention made on behalf of the appellant.

12. It has also been held by the Full Bench of the Punjab High Court in the case of Smt. Balwant Kaur v. Chief Settlement Commissioner (Lands), Punjab ((1963) 65 Punj LR 1141, 1187 (FB)) that the Chief Settlement Commissioner was competent to cancel or set aside the order of transfer even

if the sanad was granted or the sale deed had been executed and on such order being made the sanad or the sale deed will automatically fall with it.

13. On a conspectus of these decisions the point is now well settled that respondent 2, the Chief Settlement Commissioner has duly and properly made the impugned order of cancellation of the excess allotment made to the appellant.

14. It appears that the petitioner has already made an application to the government for allotment to them of the said excess land on taking from them the appropriate price. It has been further stated that Pala Singh had died during the pendency of this appeal and he left his widow and four sons and daughters as his legal representatives. It is for the Government of Punjab to consider and decide whether the legal representatives of deceased appellant are entitled to purchase the said excess land under the provisions of the Punjab Package Deal Properties (Disposal) Act, 1976 and the rules framed thereunder.

15. It is relevant to mention in this connection that the Government of Punjab amended the rules and the said amended rules have been titled as Punjab Package Deal Properties (Disposal) Rules, 1976. These rules lay down elaborate procedure as to how the lands in excess of the entitlement which have been cancelled may be transferred to the allottees or their successors-in-interest. It also appears from Rule 4 that the allottee or his legal representatives will not be entitled to have the excess land which was cancelled on the ground of fraud, concealment or misrepresentation of material facts. It is also provided in Clause 8 of the said rule that the price of the land that will be transferred shall be the current market price to be determined by the Tehsildar (States).

16. For the reasons aforesaid there is no merit in the appeal and as such it is dismissed with costs, assessed at Rs. 1000.

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