

SUPREME COURT OF INDIA

General Manager, Messrs Hutti Gold Mines Company

Vs.

Shivappa

(Dr.Ar.Lakshmanan and Altamas Kabir,JJ.)

19.02.2007

JUDGMENT

Dr.Ar.Lakshmanan, J.,

1. Heard Mr.Gopal Subramaniam, learned ASG appearing on behalf of the appellant and Mr.Dhruv Mehta, learned counsel appearing on behalf of the respondent-claimants.

2. Leave granted.

3. This appeal is directed against the order passed by the High Court of Karnataka in M.F.A.No.3707/2006 and other connected matters. The High Court of Karnataka by order dt.11.01.2007 while admitting the appeals has passed the following interim order :-

" This Court doth Order that pending admission of the above appeal the operation and execution of the impugned award in LAC Nos. 1, 2, 31.3, 4, 32, 5, 6, 7, 33, 34, 8, 35, 37, 9, 10 of 2001 dated 19.12.2006 and LAC Nos.22, 23, 13, 24, 17, 26, 18, 27, 19, 14, 28, 20, 29, 15m 30 of 2001 dated 03.01.2006 on the file of the Addl.Civil Judge (Sr.Dn.) Raichur is hereby stayed subject to the appellant depositing 50% of the enhanced amounts along with the proportionate amounts towards solatium, additional market value and the interest thereon within four weeks from today i.e. 11.01.2007 with the reference Court. On such deposit being made, it is open to the claimants to draw the same."

4. Aggrieved against the direction to deposit 50% of the enhanced amount along with the proportionate amounts towards solatium, additional market value and the interest thereon, the appellant through its General Manager preferred the above Civil Appeal arising out of SLP(C) No.2471/2007.

5. We have perused the grounds of appeal and also heard the arguments advanced by learned ASG for the appellant and learned counsel for the respondents. Since the appeal is pending before the High Court, we are not expressing any opinion on the merits of the rival claims. However, in our opinion, the order of the High Court ordering deposit of 50% of the enhanced amount with liberty to withdraw needs modification. We, therefore, direct the

appellant herein to deposit 50% of the enhanced amount along with the proportionate amounts towards solatium, additional market value and the interest thereon within four weeks from today with the Reference Court. On such deposit, all the claimants are entitled to withdraw 25% of the enhanced amount without furnishing any security. The Reference Court shall open a separate account in respect of all the claimants and keep 25% of the remaining amount in fixed deposit in a nationalised bank and await further orders from the High Court in the pending appeal. Since the acquisition proceedings started in the year 1995 and the matter is pending in one forum or the other we request the High Court to dispose of the appeals filed by the appellant herein and also the appeals filed by the respondents herein/claimants within six months from today on merits and in accordance with law. We request the Hon'ble Chief Justice of the Karnataka High Court to place all the matters before a Division Bench of the said court for disposal of the same within the time stipulated in this Order.

6. The appeal stands disposed of accordingly.

7. No costs.