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* **IN THE HIGH COURT OF DELHI AT NEW DELHI**

+ **FAO 72/2018, CM APPL. 6739/2018**

M/S ICICI BANK LIMITED

..... Appellant

Through: Mr. Punit K. Bhalla, Ms. Chetna Bhalla
and Mr. Kashish Narang, Advs.

Versus

RAVI KUMAR GUPTA

..... Respondent

Through: None.

CORAM:

HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE NAJMI WAZIRI

ORDER

% **21.02.2018**

This appeal seeks setting aside of an order dated 02.02.2018 passed by the learned Additional District Judge returning the plaint on the ground that it is not maintainable for want of territorial jurisdiction. The learned counsel for the appellant submits that this was done at the pre-notice stage, hence notice would not be necessary to the respondent for the decision of the present appeal. In the circumstances, notice to the respondent is dispensed with.

It is the appellant's case that a loan of Rs. 4,65,752/- had been advanced to the respondent for financing a vehicle bearing No. DL-8CAH-0221, namely, SWIFT/VDI. Since, there has been default of repayment of the EMIs, the loan was recalled and the appellant sought possession of the vehicle by way of appointment of a Receiver. The loan recall notice to the respondent did not evince any response.

The reason for returning the plaint was that since the registered office of the Bank is in Vadodara and the defendant is a resident of Ghaziabad,

hence, the Court would have no territorial jurisdiction. This reasoning is erroneous because the loan documents were executed in Delhi and the loan was disbursed from Delhi. The loan documents annexed to the appeal, show that the first Credit Facility Application Form and the irrevocable power of attorney, both were executed by the respondent at Videocon Tower, Jhandewalan Extension, New Delhi. Accordingly, the suit is maintainable in Delhi.

In similar case filed by the appellant Bank, this Court held in ***ICICI Bank Ltd. vs. Astha Kumar & Anr.*** 224 (2015) DLT 651 and ***ICICI Bank Ltd. vs. Suresh & Anr.*** in FAO No. 51/2017 decided on 28.02.2017, that the Delhi Courts would have jurisdiction to adjudicate the lis. The learned counsel for the appellant submits that in view of the above, the Trial Court would be bound to go by the averments as made in the plaint. The veracity of the averments in the suit would, however, be decided after the leading of evidence.

In view of the aforesaid, the Court finds that there was sufficient ground for the Trial Court to proceed to take cognizance of and adjudicate the matter. Accordingly, the appeal is allowed and the impugned order dated 02.02.2018 is set aside. The Trial Court is directed to recommence the proceedings and issue notice if the suit is otherwise in order.

At the request of the learned counsel for the appellant and in view of the decision in ***ICICI Bank Ltd. vs. Astha Kumar & Anr.*** (supra), so as to prevent any prejudice that may be caused to the appellant apropos the hypothecated vehicle, the appellant's representative Mr. Anil Kumar is appointed as a Receiver to take possession of vehicle bearing No. DL-8CAH-0221, namely, SWIFT/VDI. He shall take possession of the same in

terms of the directions passed by this Court in FAO No. 51/2017 titled as **“ICICI Bank Ltd. vs. Suresh & Anr.”**, decided on 28.02.2017. The relevant directions are reproduced hereunder:-

“12. The receiver shall take over the possession of the vehicle from the respondent at the address(es) given in the loan application. If the vehicle is not available at the said address(es), the receiver shall be at liberty to recover the vehicle wherever found. However, the receiver shall not stop a running vehicle on the road to forcibly take out the driver to take the possession of the vehicle. The receiver shall also not make any attempt to block the passage of a car to bring it to a halt to take its possession.

13. The receiver shall avoid taking the possession of the vehicle if the vehicle is occupied by a woman who is not accompanied by a male member or an elderly, infirm or physically/mentally challenged person. In such cases, the receiver shall take the possession of the vehicle from the borrower’s residence.

14. The receiver shall be at liberty to take the assistance of the local police, if required, for taking over possession of the vehicle. The concerned SHO shall provide assistance to the receiver as and when requested.

15. The receiver shall also ensure that the repossession of the vehicle does not result in any breach of peace. In the event of any breach of peace by the person occupying the vehicle, the receiver shall not proceed without assistance of police.

16. At the time of taking the custody of the vehicle, the receiver shall deliver copy of this order to the person from whom the possession is taken.

17. At the time of taking the custody of the vehicle, the receiver shall take photographs of the vehicle from different angles along with the person(s) occupying the vehicle as well as the place of taking over the possession.

18. The receiver shall prepare an inventory of the articles/accessories found in the vehicle and shall furnish the copy of the inventory to the person from whom the possession

is taken.

19. After taking the possession of the vehicle, the receiver shall keep the vehicle in safe custody.

20. If the respondent makes payment of the outstanding instalments as on date of possession, the receiver shall release the vehicle in question to the respondent on superdari, subject to an undertaking by the respondent to the receiver for regular repayment of future monthly instalments till the expiry of the tenure and a declaration not to part with the vehicle or create third party interest in the vehicle until the entire amount is paid.

21. If the respondent is not in a position to clear the entire outstanding instalments, the receiver shall give him another opportunity to pay the outstanding instalments within 30 days of taking over the possession of the vehicle and in case the respondent makes the payment of the outstanding instalments within the said period, the receiver shall release the vehicle to the respondent subject to the undertaking as aforementioned.

22. If the respondent does not make the payment of the outstanding amount to the appellant bank within 60 days, the receiver would be authorised to sell the vehicle in question in a public auction with prior written notice (to be sent by Speed Post AD) of the date of auction to the respondent at the address(es) mentioned in the loan agreement or the address from where the vehicle is taken into possession so that the respondent may also be able to participate in the auction to enable the appellant to fetch maximum amount from the sale of the vehicle. The receiver shall carry out video recording of the auction proceedings and shall submit the same before the Trial Court along with his final report.

23. That the receiver shall submit his first report before the Trial Court within 10 days of taking the custody of the vehicle along with the photographs and inventory mentioned above. The final report shall be submitted before the Trial Court within 10 days of the public auction along with the proceedings for public auction and video recording of the public auction.....”

The Trial Court record be returned back forthwith and the matter be listed before the Trial Court on 10.04.2018.

The appeal and the pending application stand disposed off.

NAJMI WAZIRI, J

FEBRUARY 21, 2018

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