



BEFORE THE MADURAI BENCH OF MADRAS HIGH COURT

DATED: 13.08.2020

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THE HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE G.R.SWAMINATHAN

W.P.(MD)No.9185 of 2020

D.Stephen Arputha Raj

... Petitioner

Vs.

1.The District Supply and Consumer Protection Officer,
Collectorate Complex, Thoothukudi.

2.The Inspector of Police,
Civil Supplies CID,
Thoothukudi.
in Crime No.72 of 2020)

... Respondents

Prayer: Writ petition is filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India, to issue a Writ of Mandamus, directing the second respondent to release the petitioner's vehicle Ashok Leyland Lorry bearing Registration NO.TN 73 A 3699 within time stipulated by this Court.

For Petitioner	: Mr.R.Aravind Raj
For Respondents	: Mr.M.Rajarajan Government Advocate

O R D E R

Heard the learned counsel on either side. By consent of both parties, this writ petition is taken up for final disposal at the admission stage itself.

2. The petition mentioned vehicle has been seized by the respondents as the vehicle was allegedly found in transporting of PDS Rice.

3. The learned Government Advocate states that even though the criminal case has been registered, the vehicle in question is yet to be produced before the jurisdictional Court. The case is still under investigation. I am of the view that so long as the vehicle has not been produced before the Jurisdictional Court, the Writ Court will always have the power to direct for the release of the vehicle. He further states that confiscation proceedings are pending.



4. The petitioner's counsel gives an undertaking that the petitioner will see to it that the vehicle is not involved in any other offences of similar nature. The vehicle will be produced before the authority or the Court concerned as and when required. The learned counsel appearing for the petitioner states that the vehicle will not be alienated.

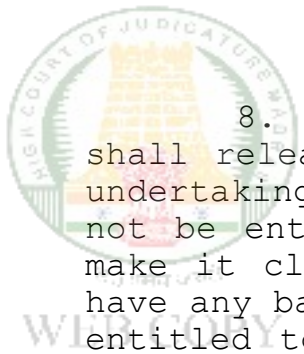
5. The submission of the learned counsel for the petitioner is placed on record. If the undertaking given before this Court is breached, the benefit of this order will stand recalled and the vehicle in question will be taken back to custody and it will be released only after getting orders from this Court on such terms as this Court may deem it fit to impose.

6. I am of the view that keeping the petition mentioned vehicle in the custody of the respondents is not going to serve any purpose. The Hon'ble Supreme Court in the decision reported in (2002) 10 SCC 283 (Sunderbhai Ambalal Desai and Others V. State of Gujarat) has held as follows:-

"17. In our view, whatever be the situation, it is of no use to keep such seized vehicles at the police stations for a long period. It is for the Magistrate to pass appropriate orders immediately by taking appropriate bond and guarantee as well as security for return of the said vehicles, if required at any point of time. This can be done pending hearing of applications for return of such vehicles."

7. The petitioner's counsel states that the petitioner is only an agreement holder and that his name is not found in the RC book. He is only having the photocopies of the RC Book. Therefore, the respondents are directed to release the said vehicle to the petitioner even though his name is not figuring in the RC Book, subject to the following conditions:-

- a) The petitioner is directed to take a pay a sum of Rs.50,000/- (Rupees Fifty Thousand only) in favour of the Officer-in-Charge, High Court Legal Services Committee, Madurai Bench of Madras High Court, Madurai, in S.B.A/c.No.496037387, IFSC : IDIB000H040, Indian Bank, High Court Branch, Madurai. It will be a non refundable payment. The Registrar (Judicial) is directed to spend the amount towards feeding the members of the Narikuravar Community living at Sakkimangalam Village, Madurai.
- b) The petitioner shall not alienate or encumber the vehicle in question till the proceedings are completed.
- c) As and when the respondents call for the vehicle for enquiry, the petitioner has to produce the vehicle in question and he shall cooperate with the enquiry to be conducted by the respondents.



8. Upon completion of these formalities, the respondents shall release the vehicle forthwith and without any delay. If this undertaking given by the petitioner is breached, the petitioner will not be entitled to interim release of the vehicle in future. I make it clear that the order passed in the Writ Petition will not have any barring on the confiscation proceedings. The petitioner is entitled to only interim custody of the vehicle and nothing else. The confiscation proceedings will go on. The Writ Petition is allowed accordingly. There shall be no order as to costs.

Sd/-

Assistant Registrar (AD-II)

// True Copy //

/ /2020

Sub Assistant Registrar(CS)

Tsg

Note: In view of the present lock down owing to COVID-19 pandemic, a web copy of the order may be utilized for official purposes, but, ensuring that the copy of the order that is presented is the correct copy, shall be the responsibility of the advocate/litigant concerned.

To:

- 1.The District Supply and Consumer Protection Officer,
Collectorate Complex, Thoothukudi.
 - 2.The Inspector of Police,
Civil Supplies CID,
Thoothukudi.
 - 3.The Registrar (Judicial),
Madurai Bench of Madras High Court,
Madurai.
 - 4.The Officer Incharge, Legal Services Committee,
Madurai Bench of Madras High Court, Madurai.
- +1 CC to Spl GP (SR-14233[F] dated 17/08/2020)

W.P.(MD)No.9185 of 2020
13.08.2020