



BEFORE THE MADURAI BENCH OF MADRAS HIGH COURT

DATED: 21.09.2020

CORAM

THE HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE G.R.SWAMINATHAN

W.P. (MD)No.12177 of 2020

Subramanian

... Petitioner

Vs.

1.The Assistant Director,
Geology and Mines,
Tirunelveli District.

2.The Revenue Divisional Officer,
Tirunelveli, Tirunelveli District.

3.The Inspector of Police,
Palayamkottai Police Station,
Tirunelveli District.

... Respondents

Prayer: Writ petition is filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India, to issue a Writ of Mandamus, directing the respondents and their subordinates to release the Tipper Lorry bearing Registration No.TN 37 CT 2311 seized on 09.08.2020 by the third respondent and which is now under his custody to the petitioner.

For Petitioner : Mr.D.Venkatesh

For Respondents : Mr.C.Ramar

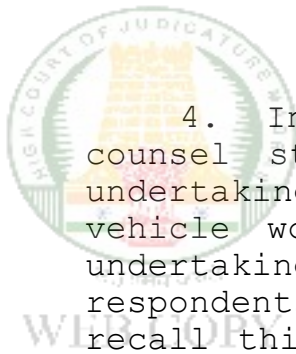
Additional Government Pleader

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 was seized in connection with the alleged illegal transportation of sand.

3. The learned Additional Government Pleader 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. The learned Additional Government Pleader informs the Court that the vehicle is involved in one previous case of the same nature.



4. Initially, I do not want to grant relief. The petitioner's counsel states that the petitioner would file an affidavit of undertaking to the effect that neither he nor the petition mentioned vehicle would ever get involved in any criminal case. If this undertaking given by the petitioner is breached, it is open to the respondents to bring it to my notice and I will not hesitate to recall this order and the petition mentioned vehicle also will be taken back to custody. The learned counsel appearing for the petitioner states that the vehicle will not be alienated. The petitioner's counsel on instructions states that the petitioner is willing to file an undertaking affidavit to this effect. Such an undertaking affidavit will be filed before this Court within a period of two weeks from the date of receipt of a copy of this order.

5. 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.

6. Therefore, the respondents are directed to release the said vehicle subject to the following condition:-

- a) The petitioner is directed to 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, 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 for appropriate welfare activities such as feeding the disadvantaged communities in Madurai District.
- b) The petitioner shall not alienate or encumber the vehicle in question till the proceedings are completed.
- c) The petitioner shall produce all the documents pertaining to the ownership of the seized vehicle.
- a) 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.



7. Upon completion of this formality, the respondents shall release the vehicle forthwith without any delay. The Writ Petition is allowed accordingly. There shall be no order as to costs.

Sd/-

Assistant Registrar ()

// True Copy //

/ /2020

Sub Assistant Registrar(CS)

Rmi

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 Assistant Director,
Geology and Mines,
Tirunelveli District.
- 2.The Revenue Divisional Officer,
Tirunelveli, Tirunelveli District.
- 3.The Inspector of Police,
Palayamkottai Police Station,
Tirunelveli District.

Copy to :

- 1.The Registrar (Judicial),
Madurai Bench of Madras High Court,
Madurai.
- 2.The Officer Incharge,
High Court Legal Services Committee,
Madurai Bench of Madras High Court,
Madurai.

+1 CC to SPL GP (SR-17724[F] dated 22/09/2020)

W.P. (MD)No.12177 of 2020
21.09.2020

VB (30.09.2020) 3P 7C