



BEFORE THE MADURAI BENCH OF MADRAS HIGH COURT

DATED: **10.12.2020**

CORAM:

THE HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE **ABDUL QUDDHOSE**

W.P. (MD)No.18131 of 2020

Muruganandam

... Petitioner

Vs

1.The Revenue Divisional Officer,
Kumbakonam, Thanjavur District.

2.The Assistant Director,
Mines and Minerals Department,
Thanjavur.

3.The Inspector of Police,
Ayyampettai Police Station,
Thanjavur District.

... Respondents

PRAYER: Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India to issue a Writ of Mandamus, directing the respondents to release the petitioner's Bullock Cart seized by the third respondent on 27.06.2019 on the basis of the petitioner's representation dated 02.11.2020.

For Petitioner : Mr.U.Umamaheswaran

For Respondents : Mr.C.Ramesh
Special Government Pleader

ORDER

(This writ petition is heard through Video Conference)

This writ petition has been filed for a Mandamus seeking for a direction to the respondents to release the petitioner's Bullock Cart seized by the third respondent on 27.06.2019, to the petitioner.

2. Mr.C.Ramesh, the learned Special Government Pleader, accepts notice for the respondents. By consent of both parties, the Writ Petition is taken up for final disposal at the admission stage itself.

3. It is the case of the petitioner that he is having a bullock cart for the purpose of carrying goods for his agricultural activities. According to him, on 27.06.2019, the third respondent seized the bullock cart and registered a case in Crime No.142 of 2019 under Section 379 of IPC r/w section 21(4) of Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957, alleging that the petitioner has transported the sand illegally in his bullock cart.



According to him, ever since the seizure, the said bullock cart is still in the custody of the third respondent and till date, no confiscation proceedings has been initiated against the seized bullock cart.

4. It is also the contention of the petitioner that the bullock cart has also not been produced by the third respondent before the concerned Jurisdictional Court. According to him, the seized bullock cart is kept idle in the third respondent premises in the open place and exposed to the vagaries of nature, resulting in the bullock cart depreciating in value.

5. According to the petitioner, he gave a representation to the respondents on 02.11.2020 for releasing of the seized bullock cart back to him. According to him, the respondents have failed to respond to the said representation. In such circumstances, he has filed this Writ Petition seeking for release of the seized bullock cart.

6. Admittedly, the bullock cart was seized by the third respondent on 27.06.2019 and registered a case in Crime No.142 of 2019 under Section 379 of IPC r/w Section 21(4) of Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957, alleging that the petitioner has transported sand illegally in his bullock cart. Admittedly, the bullock cart is now in the third respondent premises and kept in the open place and exposed to the vagaries of nature and has also not been produced before the Jurisdictional Court.

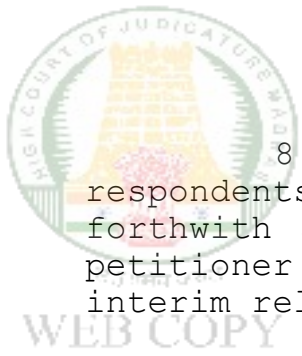
7. As rightly contended by the learned counsel appearing for the petitioner, the bullock cart will certainly depreciate in value, if it is allowed to remain in the open place and kept idle for a long period of time. No useful purpose will be served if the bullock cart is allowed to be kept idle. In similar matters, this Court has granted release of seized vehicles to the respective petitioners subject to fulfillment of certain conditions. Therefore, this Court is inclined to grant similar relief to the petitioner subject to fulfillment of the following conditions:-

(i)the petitioner shall execute a bond for a sum of **Rs.3,000/- (Rupees Three Thousand only)** in favour of the first respondent within a period of two weeks from the date of receipt of a copy of this order.

(ii)the petitioner shall not use the bullock cart for any illegal activities.

(iii)before releasing the bullock cart, the police authority shall take photographs of the bullock cart at the cost of the petitioner.

(iv)As and when the respondents call for the bullock cart for enquiry, the petitioner has to produce the bullock cart in question and he shall cooperate with the enquiry to be conducted by the respondents.



8. Upon completion of the above mentioned formalities, the respondents shall release the bullock cart to the petitioner forthwith and without any delay. If this undertaking given by the petitioner is breached, the petitioner will not be entitled for interim release of the bullock cart in the future.

9. The Writ Petition is disposed of accordingly. There shall be no order as to costs.

Sd/-

Assistant Registrar (AD-II)

// True Copy //

/ /2020

Sub Assistant Registrar(CS)

TM

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 Revenue Divisional Officer,
Kumbakonam, Thanjavur District.

2.The Assistant Director,
Mines and Minerals Department,
Thanjavur.

3.The Inspector of Police,
Ayyampettai Police Station,
Thanjavur District.

+1 CC to M/s.GP (SR-25151[F] dated 11/12/2020)

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10.12.2020

MJ(CO)

AP(16/12/2020) 3P 5C