



BEFORE THE MADURAI BENCH OF MADRAS HIGH COURT

DATED: 22.12.2020

CORAM:

THE HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE **ABDUL QUDDHOSE**

W.P. (MD) No. 19032 of 2020

WEB COPY

Sujan

... Petitioner

Vs

1. The District Revenue Officer,
Tirunelveli District, Tirunelveli.

2. The Inspector of Police,
CS - CID - Madurai District,
Tirunelveli Police Station.

... Respondents

PRAYER: Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India to issue a Writ of Mandamus, directing the respondents to release the Ashok Leyland Dost (Mini tempo) bearing Registration No. TN 75 K 5049, to the petitioner seized on 02.12.2020, which is in the custody of the respondents.

For Petitioner : Mr. S. Sivakumar

For Respondents : Mrs. V. P. M. Vaishnavi
Additional Government Pleader

ORDER

(This writ petition is heard through video conference)

This writ petition has been filed for a Mandamus to direct the respondents to release the Ashok Leyland Dost (Mini tempo) bearing Registration No. TN 75 K 5049 seized by the second respondent on 02.12.2020.

2. Heard Mr. S. Sivakumar, learned counsel appearing for the petitioner and Mrs. V. P. M. Vaishnavi, learned Additional Government Pleader appearing for the respondents.

3. By consent of both parties, the Writ Petition is taken up for final disposal at the admission stage itself.

4. It is the case of the petitioner that he is the owner of the aforementioned vehicle. According to the petitioner, on 02.12.2020, the respondent police seized the above mentioned vehicle of the petitioner, alleging that the vehicle was used to illegally transport the 1,300 Kgs of PDS rice in 70 gunny bags (each contains 50 Kgs) and registered a case in Crime No. 216 of 2020 for the alleged offence under Section 6(4) of TNSC (RDCS) Order 1982 r/w. Section 7(1)(a)(ii) of Essential Commodities Act, 1955.



5. It is the contention of the petitioner that he is never involved in any illegal transportation of Rice as alleged by the Police and he has not committed any prior criminal offence. According to the petitioner, the seized vehicle is now being kept in the open place and due to exposure of sun and rain and the vagaries of nature, the vehicle will lose its value and may, ultimately become a wreck and worthless. In such circumstances, this Writ Petition has been filed seeking for release of the said vehicle.

6. The petitioner has also given a representation on 03.12.2020 to the respondents seeking for release of the said seized vehicle. According to the petitioner, the said representation has not been considered by the respondents till date. As rightly contended by the petitioner, if the vehicle, which was seized by the second respondent, is kept in the open place, it will not be useful to anyone in the near future and if it is continued to remain in the open, it has to face the vagaries of nature and ultimately will become a wreck and worthless. However, whether the petitioner has committed the alleged offence or not can be adjudicated only after trial before the Criminal Court. Till such time, the vehicle cannot be kept idle. Therefore, this Court is inclined to grant an order as sought for by the petitioner in this Writ Petition, subject to the fulfillment of the following conditions by the petitioner.

(i) Since it is the case involving seizure of PDS Rice, the petitioner cannot give security by way of bond, in stead will have to give cash security. Accordingly, the petitioner shall deposit a sum of Rs.15,000/- (Rupees fifteen thousand only) with the first respondent within a period of two weeks from the date of receipt of a copy of this order.

(ii) the petitioner shall give an unconditional undertaking to the first respondent that he shall not alienate or encumber the vehicle in question without permission of the Jurisdictional Magistrate till the completion of the confiscation proceedings

(iii) the petitioner shall not change the colour and scheme of the vehicle.

(iv) the petitioner shall not use the vehicle for any illegal activities.

(v) before releasing the vehicle, the police authority shall take photographs of the vehicle at the cost of the petitioner.

(vi) The petitioner shall produce all xerox copies of the documents pertaining to the ownership of the seized vehicle to the first respondent.

(vii) 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 the above mentioned formalities, the second respondent shall release the vehicle viz., Ashok Leyland Dost (Mini tempo) bearing Registration No. TN 75 K 5049 to the petitioner forthwith 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. As far as confiscation proceedings initiated against the seized vehicle is concerned, the same can go on without any interference.

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

Sd/-

Assistant Registrar (CO)

// 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 District Revenue Officer,
Tirunelveli District, Tirunelveli.

2. The Inspector of Police,
CS - CID - Madurai District,
Tirunelveli Police Station.

+1 CC to SPL GP (SR-27237[F] dated 28/12/2020)

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VB (31.12.2020) 3P 4C