

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT PATNA
Civil Writ Jurisdiction Case No.1030 of 2022

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Sujay Kumar son of Ramprit Yadav Resident of Village- Arhit, Police Station- Ghoshi (Okari O.P.), District- Jehanabad.

... .. Petitioner/s

Versus

1. The State of Bihar through the Principal Secretary Department of Excise, Govt. of Bihar, Patna.
2. The Additional Chief Secretary, Bihar, Patna.
3. The Excise Commissioner, Bihar, Patna.
4. The Collector, Nalanda.
5. The Additional Collector, Nalanda at Biharsharif.
6. The Superintendent of Police, Nalanda.
7. The Excise Superintendent, Nalanda.
8. The Sub- Inspector, Excise Department, Nalanda.

... .. Respondent/s

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Appearance :

For the Petitioner/s : Mr. Anil Kumar Singh, Adv
For the Respondent/s : Mr. Vivek Prasad (GP 7)

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(The proceedings of the Court are being conducted by Hon'ble the Chief Justice /Hon'ble Judges through Video Conferencing from their residential offices/residences. Also, the Advocates and the Staffs joined the proceedings through Video Conferencing from their residences /offices.)

CORAM: HONOURABLE THE CHIEF JUSTICE

and

HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE S. KUMAR

ORAL JUDGMENT

(Per: HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE S. KUMAR)

Date : 01-04-2022

Heard learned counsel for the parties.

Petitioner has prayed for the following relief(s):-

“I. For issuance of a writ in the nature of certiorari for quashing of the order dated 04.12.2021 passed by the learned Additional Chief Secretary, Bihar, Patna, (Respondent No. 2) passed in Excise Revision No. 235 of 2021 by which the learned Additional Chief Secretary has been pleased to dismiss the said revision application with regard to release a motor cycle bearing Splendor Motor

Cycle bearing No. BR21V-9638.

II. For also setting aside order dated 20.09.2021 passed by the Excise Commissioner, Bihar, Patna Excise Appeal No. 588 of 2021 by which he has dismissed the appeal and affirming the order dated 04.08.2021 passed by the Additional Collector cum District Magistrate, Nalanda in Excise (Vehicle Confiscation) Case No. 205/2021 arising out of Telhara police station Case No. 78 of 2021 under Section 30(a) of the Bihar Prohibition and Excise Act, 2018, whereby has directed that the confirmation of the order Collector, Nalanda, passed in this case.”

Petitioner claims to be the owner of the seized vehicle.

Allegation is recovery of 15 litre of illicit liquor from the seized vehicle of the petitioner.

It is submitted by learned counsel for the State that during pendency of writ petition, there has been amendment in the Bihar Prohibition and Excise Rules, 2021 and a new Rule 12(A) has been inserted which reads as under:-

“12. A. Release of Vehicles, Conveyance etc. on payment of Penalty:- (1) If any vehicles, conveyance, vessel, animal etc. has been seized by any police or excise officer under the Act, then in terms of section -57B(1) of the Act, the Collector or an officer authorized by him upon receipt of an application in Form IV by the owner of the said conveyance or vehicle etc., may release the said conveyance or vehicle upon payment of such penalty as may be ordered by the Collector or the officer authorized by him.

Provided, where it is not possible to ascertain the owner of the vehicle or the owner is not coming to claim the vehicle, the Collector or the officer authorized by him, after waiting for 15 days from the date of seizure, shall

proceed to confiscate and auction the vehicle as per the provisions of the Act.

(2) The penalty shall be 50% of the latest insured value of vehicle/conveyance. The insured value is the value of the vehicle as assessed by the insurance company. Where, the insured value is not available or the Collector or the officer authorized by him has reason to believe that the vehicle is undervalued, he shall get the valuation done by the District Transport Officer and 50% of that value shall be the amount of penalty.

In any case, the Collector shall not wait beyond 15 days from the date of seizure and if during this period, the accused/owner does not pay up the penalty, he shall proceed with the confiscation/auction.

(3) Notwithstanding above, if on a report by police officer or excise officer, the Collector or the officer authorized by him is satisfied that releasing the vehicle or conveyance shall not be in the public interest, he shall proceed ahead with the confiscation of the said vehicle or conveyance and its subsequent auction / disposal.

(4) Where the conveyance is such that its valuation / insurance is not possible, the Collector or the officer authorized by him shall impose such fine as he deems fit. While imposing such fine, the Collector or the officer authorized by him shall have due regard to the economic status of the individual, nature of his involvement in the crime and the quantum of intoxicant recovered.

(5) Such penalty shall be, regardless of the outcome of the trial if any, before the Special Court, non-refundable.

(6) The owner of the vehicle / conveyance shall, after the release of the vehicle / conveyance, produce the vehicle/ conveyance as and when required by the authorities.

[Explanation:- **In all pending / ongoing cases of**

confiscation/auction of vehicles, the Collector or the officer authorized by him may give an opportunity to the existing owner to pay the aforesaid penalty and get the vehicle released. Upon satisfaction about ownership and upon payment of such penalty, the ongoing confiscation/auction proceeding may be dropped and the vehicle released.]”

In said view of the matter, the writ petition is disposed of with liberty to petitioner to avail the remedy of the amended provision 12(A) of the Bihar Prohibition & Excise (Amendment) Rules, 2022. It is made clear that this Court has not expressed any opinion with respect to merit of case.

Equally, liberty reserved to petitioner to approach this Court for same and subsequent cause of action, if so arises.

(Sanjay Karol, CJ)

(S. Kumar, J)

ranjan/-

AFR/NAFR	NAFR
CAV DATE	NA
Uploading Date	
Transmission Date	NA