

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT PATNA
Civil Writ Jurisdiction Case No.4992 of 2022

Om Prakash Choudhary, son of Late Muneshwar Choudhary, Resident of
Jhunjhunwala Road Danapur Cantt, Police Station-Danapur, District-Patna.

... .. Petitioner/s

Versus

1. The State of Bihar through the Principal Secretary, Registration Excise and Prohibition Department, Government of Bihar, Patna.
2. The District Magistrate-cum-Collector, Patna.
3. The Senior Superintendent of Police, Patna.
4. The Excise Superintendent, Patna.
5. The Officer-in-charge Digha Police Station, District-Patna.

... .. Respondent/s

Appearance :

For the Petitioner/s : Mr.Gajendra Kumar Singh, Advocate
For the Respondent/s : Mr.Kumar Manish (SC5)

CORAM: HONOURABLE THE CHIEF JUSTICE

and

HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE S. KUMAR

ORAL JUDGMENT

(Per: HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE S. KUMAR)

(The proceedings of the Court are being conducted through Video Conferencing and the Advocates joined the proceedings through Video Conferencing from their residence.)

Date : 06-05-2022

Heard learned counsel for the parties.

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

1. That this present writ application is
being filed for issuance of appropriate

writ/writs, order/orders, direction/directions to the Respondent Authorities to release the vehicle Bajaj Auto with the name of Bajaj RECNG 4D FI and bearing Registration No.BR01PL 1509, Chassis No. MD2B47AX4 LW02842 and Engine No.A2XWLL04715 in favour of the petitioner which was seized in connection with Digha P.S. Case No. 43 of 2021 dated 18.01.2021 registered for the offence under Section 30(a) of the Bihar Prohibition and Excise Act, 2018 and/or any other relief or reliefs to which the petitioner may be found entitled to in course of hearing of this writ application.

Petitioner has approached this Court without exhausting the statutory remedy of appeal against the impugned order, as such, petitioner is granted liberty to avail the remedy of appeal against the confiscation order passed by the Confiscating Authority- cum- District Magistrate, before the Appellate Authority and if any such appeal is filed within 4 weeks then appellate authority shall condone the delay in filing the appeal and shall decide the appeal on its own merit preferably within 8

weeks from the date of its filing.

During pendency of appeal, the confiscated property/
vehicle shall not be auction sold, if not already auction sold.

With aforesaid liberty, the writ petition is disposed of.

OR

It is submitted on behalf of 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 view of amendment in the Excise Act, and same being applicable in pending cases, it shall be open for the petitioner to get his/her vehicle released after making payment of penalty in terms of Rule 12(A) inserted by amending Bihar

Prohibition and Excise Rules, 2021.

With aforesaid observation and direction, the writ
petition stands disposed of.

(Sanjay Karol, CJ)

(S. Kumar, J)

veena/rajiv-

AFR/NAFR	
CAV DATE	
Uploading Date	
Transmission Date	