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W.P.(MD)NO.28733 OF 2022

BEFORE THE MADURAI BENCH OF MADRAS HIGH COURT

DATED: 22.12.2022

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THE HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE G.R.SWAMINATHAN

W.P.(MD)No.28733 of 2022

P.Balasubramanian

... Petitioner

Vs.

1. The District Supply Officer,
Collectorate Complex, Tenkasi District.

2. The Inspector of Police,
Civil Supplies C.I.D,
Tirunelveli Unit, Madurai.

3. The District Revenue Officer,
Tenkasi, Tenkasi District.

... Respondents

Prayer: Writ petition is filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India, to issue a Writ of Mandamus, to direct the respondents herein to forthwith to release the petitioner's Ashok Leyland Dost bearing Registration No.TN-76-AM-6473 from their custody on the basis of his representation dated 12.12.2022.

For Petitioner : Mr.C.Susi Kumar

For R-1 : Mr.M.Siddharthan,
Additional Government Pleader.

For R-2 : Mr.B.Thanga Aravindh,
Government Advocate (Crl. Side).

* * *

**ORDER**

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Heard the learned counsel appearing for the petitioner and the learned Additional Government Pleader appearing for the first respondent and the learned Government Advocate appearing for the second respondent.

2. The petition mentioned vehicle was seized in connection with Crime No.367 of 2022 registered on the file of the second respondent.

3. The petition mentioned vehicle is presently in the custody of the first respondent. The vehicle is said to have been used for illegally transporting PDS rice.

4. The learned Government Advocate submitted that the petitioner's father is having a number of cases to his credit. However, it is clarified that the petitioner is not figuring as an accused. The vehicle in question has also not been provisionally involved in any criminal case. In view of the same, I am inclined to grant relief to the petitioner.



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5. It is of course open to the respondent authority to initiate confiscation proceedings. In this case we are concerned only with the issue of granting interim custody of the vehicle to the petitioner.

6. No purpose will be served in keeping the vehicle under the custody of the respondents. 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.

7. Therefore, the second respondent is directed to grant interim custody of the said vehicle to the petitioner subject to the following conditions:-



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a) *The petitioner shall pay a sum of **Rs.10,000/-** (Rupees Ten Thousand only) towards cost in the bank account number of the Principal District Judge, Dharmapuri (Ac No.30345829704, IFSC Code – SBIN0000832, State Bank of India, Dharmapuri Main Branch). It will be a non-refundable payment. The learned Principal District Judge, Dharmapuri is directed to spend the amount now deposited for enhancing the infrastructure of the courts in Dharmapuri District.*

b) *The petitioner shall not alienate or encumber the vehicle till the proceedings are completed.*

c) *The petitioner shall produce all the documents pertaining to the ownership of the seized vehicle. If the petitioner is an agreement holder, he can produce the relevant xerox copies.*



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d) 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 these formalities, the respondents shall grant interim custody of the vehicle forthwith to the petitioner without any delay. If this undertaking given by the petitioner is breached, the petitioner will not be entitled to interim custody of the vehicle in future. The Writ Petition is allowed accordingly. I make it clear that allowing of this writ petition will not have any bearing on the confiscation proceedings that may be initiated by the authorities. No costs.

22.12.2022

Index : Yes / No

Internet : Yes/ No

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To:

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7

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G.R.SWAMINATHAN,J.

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