



IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

DATED: 20.02.2023

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THE HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE V. SIVAGNANAM

CRL.R.C.NO.51 OF 2023

R. Venkatesan

.. Petitioner

Vs

The State, represented by the
the Sub Inspector of Police,
Ulundurpet Police Station,
Kallakurichi District
Crime No.316/2022)

... Respondent

Prayer: Criminal Revision Petition filed under section 397 r/w.401 Cr.P.C., to set aside the order passed in Crl.M.P.No.5025 of 2022 dated 16.12.2022 on the file of the Judicial Magistrate I, Ulundurpet, Kallakurichi and consequently direct the respondent to return the petitioner's vehicle namely Ashok Leyland Lorry bearing Regn.No.TN-48-Z-8899 to the petitioner as interim custody.

For Petitioner : Mr.K. Panjamurthy

For Respondent : Mr.V. Meganathan, GA (Crl.side)



ORDER

This Criminal Revision case has been filed challenging the order of dismissal dated 16.12.2022 passed by the Judicial Magistrate I, Ulundurpet in CrI.M.P.No.5025 of 2022 filed under sections 451 of Cr.P.C., seeking interim custody of the vehicle bearing Registration No.TN-48-Z-8899.

2. The learned counsel for the petitioner contended that the petitioner is the owner of the vehicle seized by the respondent police for illegal transportation of 1/2 units of pebbles. A case was registered by the respondent under section 379 IPC on 27.02.2022 in Cr.No.316/2022. Pursuant to which, the vehicle bearing Regn.No.TN-48-Z-8899 was seized by the respondent police. He further submitted that the petitioner is not an accused in this case and he is nothing to do with the offence and the vehicle also not involved in similar type of any cases. In such circumstances, he seeks to grant interim custody of the vehicle to the petitioner.

3. Further, the learned counsel for the petitioner submitted that no purpose will be served in keeping the vehicle under the custody of respondent police and if the vehicle is kept for a long time in the open space, it would cause damage to the vehicle. The petitioner is ready to give



appropriate guarantee as well as security for return of vehicle and also he will produce the vehicle, as and when required either before the respondent police or before the trial court. Hence, he prayed to return the vehicle and he is ready to obey any condition imposed on him by this Court.

4. The learned Government Advocate (crl.side) for the respondent objected to return the vehicle to the petitioner and submitted that there is no previous case against this petitioner and the vehicle is not involved in the similar type of case previously. There is no antecedent in this regard against this petitioner.

5. I have considered the submissions made by the learned counsel for the petitioner as well as the learned Government Advocate (crl.side) for the respondent.

6. On perusal of the records, the fact reveals that on 27.07.2022, on receiving secret information about illegal transportation of minerals, when the respondent police along with VAO and Tahsildar, went to raid near Pu.Mambakkam Village, they intercepted the petitioner's vehicle. On enquiry, they found ½ unit of pebbles was transported illegally in the vehicle. Immediately they seized the vehicle and registered a case for the



offence under section 379 IPC. The petitioner is the owner of the above said vehicle and he is not an accused in Crime No.316 of 2022. Further the vehicle was not involved previously in similar type of offences.

7. Perusal of records would further reveal that the petitioner is only the owner of vehicle and the petitioner is ready to give guarantee and security for returning the vehicle. If the vehicle is being kept in an open space, it would cause damage to the vehicle and the value of the vehicle is diminished and continuing to keep the vehicle in open air would make the vehicle unusable.

8. At this juncture, it is relevant to rely upon a decision of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in **Sunderbhai Ambalal Desai and others Vs .State of Gujarat in Special Leave Petition (crl.) 2745 of 2022 dated 01.10.2002** and relevant portion is extracted hereunder;

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.

18. In case where the vehicle is not claimed by the accused,



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owner, or the insurance company or by third person, then such vehicle may be ordered to be auctioned by the Court. If the said vehicle is insured with the insurance company, then insurance company be informed by the Court to take possession of the vehicle, which is not claimed by the owner or a third person. If insurance Company fails to take possession the vehicles may be sold as per the direction of the Court. The Court would pass such order within a period of six months from the date of production of the said vehicle before the Court. ***In any case, before handing over possession of such vehicles, appropriate photographs of the said vehicle should be taken and detailed panchanama should be prepared.***

Therefore, as per the ratio laid down by the Hon'ble Apex Court, this Court is of the view that keeping the vehicle idle in the open space, will diminish its nature and lose its value and no purpose will be served. As such, considering the nature of offence and also taking into account the fact that the vehicle is not involved in any other case similar in nature previously, this Court is inclined to allow the Criminal Revision Case.

9. Accordingly, this Criminal Revision Case is allowed and the impugned order dated 16.12.2022 passed in CrI.M.P.No.5025 of 2022 by the Judicial Magistrate-I, Ulundurpet, Kallakurichi is set aside. The respondent police is directed to return the vehicle Ashok Leyland Lorry bearing Registration No.TN-48-Z-8899 to the owner of the vehicle on the following



conditions;

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- i. the petitioner shall prove his ownership of the vehicle by producing the R.C.Book and other relevant records;
- ii. the petitioner shall not alienate or encumber the vehicle in any manner;
- iii.the petitioner shall execute a bond for a sum of Rs.10,00,000/-(Rupees ten lakhs only) before the Judicial Magistrate No.I, Ulundurpet, Kallakurichi.
- iv.the petitioner shall give an undertaking that he will not use the vehicle for any illegal activities in future,
- v. the petitioner shall take photograph of the vehicle; and
- vi.the petitioner shall also produce the vehicle as and when required before the court below and before the respondent police.

20.02.2023

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Index: yes/no
Internet:yes/no

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1. The Sub Inspector of Police,
Ulundurpet Police Station,
Kallakurichi District.
2. The Judicial Magistrate I, Ulundurpet.
3. The Public Prosecutor,
Madras High Court.

V. SIVAGNANAM, J.

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