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IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

DATED : 12.04.2023

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THE HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE N. ANAND VENKATESH

W.P No.11270 of 2023

C.Valar Jothi

Petitioner

vs.

1.The Regional Transport Officer and Licensing Authority,
Office of the Regional Transport Officer,
Transport Department,
Anna Nagar, New Aavadi Road,
Chennai.

2.The Inspector of Police,
K10 Koyambedu Police Station,
Traffic Investigation Wing West,
Chennai – 600 107.
(in Crime No.24 of 2023)

Respondents

Prayer: Writ Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India for issuance of a Writ of Mandamus, directing the respondents to forthwith return my original Driving License bearing DL No.TN 45 – 19990008353 to him within a time that may be fixed by this Court.

For Petitioner : Mr.K.Hariharan

For Respondents : Mrs.S.Mythreyi Chandru
Special Government Pleader



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ORDER

This writ petition has been filed for issue of writ of mandamus directing the respondents to return the original driving license of the petitioner.

2.Heard Mr.K.Hariharan, learned counsel appearing on behalf of the petitioner and Mrs.S.Mythre Chandru, learned Special Government Pleader appearing on behalf of the respondents.

2.The petitioner is a Driver in the Tamil Nadu State Transport Corporation. On 23.02.2023, when the petitioner was driving the vehicle a fatal accident occurred. Pursuant to the same, an FIR was registered in Crime No.24 of 2023 for offence under Sections 279 and 304 (A) of IPC read with Sections 134(a), 134(b) and 187 of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988. It is brought to the notice of this Court that the investigation is pending.

3.The 2nd respondent police after registration of the FIR collected the original driving license from the petitioner and it was sent to the 1st respondent, who is said to have recommended for the cancellation of the driving license.



4.The petitioner gave a representation to the respondents requesting for returning back the original driving license. Since the same was not considered, the present writ petition has been filed before this Court seeking for appropriate direction.

5.The issue involved in the present writ petition is squarely covered by the earlier order passed by this Court in W.P.No.21843 of 2021, dated 06.10.2021. The relevant portions in the order are extracted hereunder:

4. The issue involved in the present writ petition is covered by the earlier order passed by this Court in W.P.(MD) No.8792 of 2021 dated 29.04.2021. The relevant portions of the order are extracted hereunder.

“ 6.The issue that is involved in the present writ petition is squarely covered by the earlier orders passed by this Court, wherein, this Court has consistently taken the view that, without passing orders under Section 19(1) of the Motor Vehicles Act, the original driving licence cannot be permanently impounded. It will be useful to extract one such order passed by this Court in W.P.(MD).No.3527 of 2020, dated 21.02.2020.

“7.It is settled law that until the licence or any certificate issued by the competent authority is cancelled or suspended or revoked in the manner known to law, it is



deemed to be in force. The impounding of licence will come only after passing of the order as per the relevant provisions of the statute, in this case, under Section 19 of the Motor Vehicles, Act, 1988.

8. In similar circumstances, a Division Bench of this Court, in P.Sethuram v. The Licensing Authority, The Regional Transport Officer, Dindigul, reported in 201 Writ L.R.100, held that even before passing the order under Section 19 of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, if driving licence is impounded, it amounts to pre-determination of the issue and the authority has no jurisdiction to do so.

9. I do also respectfully agree with the views of the Division Bench of this Court and in the instant case, the respondents have no power to impound the driving licence of the petitioner and retain it with him. The petitioner is a driver and he is entitled to use the licence till it is legally cancelled or suspended.

10. In such circumstances, a direction is issued to the first respondent. The Regional Transport Officer, Trichy District, to return the original driving licence bearing D.L.No.TN5019920000594 to the petitioner forthwith, on receipt of a copy of this order.”

5. In view of the above, there shall be a direction to the first respondent to return the original Driving Licence No. TN2819950002495 to the petitioner forthwith on receipt of a copy of this order. With the above directions, this writ petition

is disposed of. No costs.



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6. In view of the above, there shall be a direction to the 1st respondent to return back the original driving license to the petitioner forthwith on receipt of a copy of this order.

7. This writ petition is disposed of with the above direction. No Costs.

12.04.2023

Index : Yes/No
Internet : Yes/No
Speaking Order/Non-Speaking Order
Neutral Citation Case : Yes/No
ssr

(2/4)

Note: Issue Order Copy on 17.04.2023

To

1. The Regional Transport Officer and Licensing Authority,
Office of the Regional Transport Officer,
Transport Department,
Anna Nagar, New Aavadi Road,
Chennai.
2. The Inspector of Police,
K10 Koyambedu Police Station,
Traffic Investigation Wing West,
Chennai – 600 107.



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N. ANAND VENKATESH, J.

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W.P No.11270 of 2023

**12.04.2023
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