



CRL.R.C.NO.807 OF 2023

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

DATED : 28.04.2023

CORAM

THE HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE V. SIVAGNANAM

CRL.R.C.NO.807 OF 2023

Ponramesh

.. Petitioner

Vs.

State Rep. By
The Inspector of Police
Sulur Police Station
Coimbatore District.
Crime No.467 of 2022

.. Respondent

PRAYER: Criminal Revision Case filed under Section 397 r/w. 401 Cr.P.C. to set aside the order passed in CrI.M.P.No.1481 of 2023 on the file of learned Judicial Magistrate Court, Sulur, dated 10.04.2023.

For Petitioner : Mr.S.N.Arunkumar

For Respondent : Mr.R.Vinothraja
Government Advocate (Criminal Side)



CRL.R.C.NO.807 OF 2023

ORDER

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This Criminal Revision Case has been filed challenging the order of dismissal dated 10.04.2023 passed by the learned Judicial Magistrate, Sulur, in C.M.P.No.1481 of 2023, seeking interim custody of the vehicle viz., TATA ACE VEHICLE bearing Registration No.TN38-CK-5402 to the petitioner.

2.The facts of the case is that the petitioner is the owner of the TATA ACE VEHICLE bearing Registration No.TN38-CK-5402. The respondent police registered a case in Crime No.467/2022 for the offences under Section 24(1) of Cigarette and Other Tobacco Products Act, 2003 and Section 328 IPC for illegal transportation of 148 KGS of banned Tobacco products. They have seized the above said vehicle alleging that the vehicle has been engaged in illegal transportation of 148 KGS of banned Tobacco products. Since the petitioner is the owner of the vehicle, he filed a petition in C.M.P.No.1481 of 2023 before the learned Judicial Magistrate, Sulur, seeking interim custody of the vehicle and the same was dismissed by the Trial Court on 10.04.2023.



CRL.R.C.NO.807 OF 2023

3.The learned counsel for the petitioner submitted that the vehicle is not involved in any previous case of offence of similar in nature and if the vehicle is kept in open space under unconditional weather conditions, the same would depreciate its value and user capacity.

4.Further, the learned counsel for the petitioner contended 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.

5.The learned Government Advocate (Criminal Side) objected to return of vehicle, stating that the vehicle was used for illegal transportation of 148 KGS of banned Tobacco products and if the vehicle is ordered to be returned, he may use the vehicle for committing the same offence. He fairly submitted that the vehicle is involved in one previous case.



CRL.R.C.NO.807 OF 2023

6.Heard both sides and perused the entire materials available on record.

7.A perusal of the records would reveal that on 07.08.2022, the respondent police seized the TATA ACE VEHICLE bearing Registration No.TN38-CK-5402 having in possession of 148 KGS of banned Tobacco products and registered a case against the owner of the vehicle in Crime No.467 of 2022 under Section 24(1) of Cigarette and Other Tobacco Products Act, 2003 and Section 328 IPC. The petitioner is the owner of the TATA ACE VEHICLE bearing Registration No.TN38-CK-5402.

8.Perusal of records would further reveal that the petitioner is the owner of vehicle and he 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. Further, the Hon'ble Supreme Court in ***SUNDERBHAI AMBALAL DESAI AND OTHERS VS. STATE OF GUJARAT IN SPECIAL LEAVE***



CRL.R.C.NO.807 OF 2023

PETITION (CRL.) 2745 OF 2022 DATED 01.10.2002 has held that in order to protect the property, the Apex Court has directed to handover the seized articles to the owner on proper Panchnama.

9.Considering the above aspects and also 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.

10.In the result, this Criminal Revision Case is allowed and the impugned order passed by the Trial Court is set aside. The interim custody of the vehicle viz., TATA ACE VEHICLE bearing Registration No.TN38-CK-5402 is ordered to be handed over to the petitioner, who is the owner of the vehicle, on the following conditions:-



- (i) the petitioner shall prove his ownership of the vehicle by producing the R.C.Book and other relevant records;
- (ii) the petitioner shall execute a personal bond for a sum of Rs.5,00,000/- (Rupees Five Lakhs only) before the Judicial Magistrate, Sulur;
- (iii) the abovesaid Court is directed not to insist upon the petitioner for producing Solvency Certificate while releasing the vehicle;
- (iv) the Court may prepare a Panchnama in Judicial Form No.82 with regard to the vehicle and such panchanama can be used in evidence.
- (v) the petitioner may take photograph of the vehicle and certified under Section 65B of the Central Act 1 of 1972 and such photographs may be used as secondary evidence.
- (vi) the petitioner shall not alienate or encumber the vehicle in any manner;



CRL.R.C.NO.807 OF 2023

(vii) the petitioner shall give an undertaking that he will not use the vehicle for any illegal activities in future;

(viii) the petitioner shall also produce the vehicle as and when required before the court below and before the respondent police.

28.04.2023

Index : Yes/No

Internet : Yes/No

TK

To

1.The Judicial Magistrate
Sulur.

2.The Inspector of Police
Sulur Police Station
Coimbatore District.

3.The Public Prosecutor
High Court of Madras.



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CRL.R.C.NO.807 OF 2023

V. SIVAGNANAM, J.

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CRL.R.C.NO.807 OF 2023

28.04.2023