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BEFORE THE MADURAI BENCH OF MADRAS HIGH COURT

DATED: 23.01.2023

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THE HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE G.R.SWAMINATHAN

W.P.(MD)No.1121 of 2023

V.Meenakshisundaram

... Petitioner

VS.

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

2.The Inspector of Police,
CSCID, Madurai Unit,
In Cr.No.265/2022

3.The District Revenue Officer,
Madurai, Madurai 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 E-Comet bearing Registration No.TN 58 BE 4423 from their custody on the basis of the petitioner's representation dated 11.01.2023.

For Petitioner : Mr.M.Chandrabose

For R1 : Mr.A.K.Manikkam,
Special Government Pleader



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For R2 & R3

: Mr.B.Thanga Aravindh,
Government Advocate(Crl.Side)

ORDER

Heard the learned counsel on either side.

2.The petition mentioned vehicle was seized in connection with Crime No.265 of 2022 registered on the file of the second respondent. The petition mentioned vehicle is presently in the custody of the respondents. The vehicle is said to have been used for illegally transporting of PDS rice.

3.It is of course open to the respondents to initiate confiscation proceedings. But in this case, we are concerned only with the issue of granting interim custody of the vehicle to the petitioner. I am of the view that 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.

4. Therefore, the respondents are directed to grant interim custody of the said vehicle to the petitioner subject to the following conditions:-

- a) The petitioner shall pay a sum of **Rs.10,000/-** 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.
- b) The learned Principal District Judge, Dharmapuri is directed to spend the amount now deposited for enhancing the infrastructure of the courts in Dharmapuri District.
- c) The petitioner shall not alienate or encumber the vehicle till the proceedings are completed.
- d) 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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- e) 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.

5.The respondents shall grant interim custody of the vehicle forthwith to the petitioner without any delay. If the 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.

23.01.2023

Index : Yes / No
Internet : Yes/ No
skm

To:

- 1.The District Supply Officer, Collectorate Complex, Madurai District.
- 2.The Inspector of Police, CSCID, Madurai Unit, In Cr.No.265/2022.
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G.R.SWAMINATHAN,J.

SKM

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