



Crl.RC(MD).No.448 of 2025

BEFORE THE MADURAI BENCH OF MADRAS HIGH COURT

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DATED: 03.12.2025

CORAM:

THE HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE MOHAMMED SHAFFIQ

Crl.R.C.(MD)No.448 of 2025

Muthulakshmi
W/o Sasikumar

..Petitioner

Vs.

The State of Tamil Nadu
Rep by The Inspector of Police
Papanasam Police station
Thanjavur District.
Crime No. 483/2024

..Respondent

PRAYER: Criminal Revision Petition is filed under Section 438 r/w.442 of BNSS, 2023, to call for the records and set aside the order in Crl.M.P.No. 2577 of 2024 on the file of learned District Munsif cum Judicial Magistrate, Papanasam, Thanjavur district dt. 27.09.2024 and allow the above Criminal Revision Petition.

For Petitioner : Mr.S.Sathyachidambaram

For Respondent : Mr.P.Kottaisamy
Government Advocate (Crl.Side)



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ORDER

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Heard Mr.S.Sathyachidambaram, learned Counsel for Revision Petitioner and Mr.P.Kottaisamy, learned Government Advocate (Crl.side) for the Respondent.

2. The present Criminal Revision Petition has been filed to set aside the order of District Munsif cum Judicial Magistrate Court, Papanasam, Thanjavur District, dated 27.09.2024 in Crl.M.P.No.2577 of 2024, whereby the petition filed by petitioner under Section 497 of BNSS for interim custody of vehicle viz., Bajaj Pulsar 125 two wheeler, bearing Registration No.TN 68 AM 2738, was rejected on the premise that the country's natural resources are at stake. Lower Court also took into consideration the submissions of the respondent police that, at the time of seizure, petitioner had neither a permit nor a licence to use the vehicle for transporting minerals; that handing over the said vehicle to petitioner could result in it being mortgaged or altered; and that no documents proving the petitioner's ownership had been submitted to the respondent police.



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3. Mr.S.Sathyachidambaram, learned Counsel for Revision Petitioner would submit that petitioner claims to be owner of the vehicle viz., Bajaj Pulsar 125, bearing Registration No.TN 68 AM 2738. The said vehicle was seized by the Respondent Police and a case was registered in Crime No.483 of 2024, dated 19.05.2024 for offence Section 379 of IPC and Section 21(4) of Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957, alleging that petitioner's son namely Arivalagan was illegally transported river sand. Petitioner has filed Crl.MP.No.2577 of 2024 before the District Munsif cum Judicial Magistrate, Papanasam, Thanjavur District, to grant interim custody of the said vehicle and the said petition was dismissed by the court below by the impugned order dated 27.09.2024 for the reasons stated supra. Hence, this Criminal Revision Case has been filed.

4. Learned Counsel for Petitioner would further submit that petitioner is the owner of the said vehicle and that he would abide by any conditions that may be imposed by this Court. In support thereof, he produced the copy of RC Book of said vehicle and the same was perused by Mr.P.Kottaisamy,

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learned Government Advocate (Crl.side) appearing for respondent who confirmed that petitioner is the owner of the subject vehicle.

5. Learned Government Advocate (Crl.Side) submit that the said vehicle may be released subject to conditions and in case, confiscation proceedings are being initiated, petitioner must co-operate and the same was agreed to by learned counsel for Revision Petitioner.

6. Before proceeding further, it may be relevant to refer to provisions of Sections 497 and 503 of Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 (BNSS), which reads as follows:-

"497. Order for custody and disposal of property pending trial in certain cases.-When any property is produced before any Criminal Court during any inquiry or trial, the Court may make such order as it thinks fit for the proper custody of such property pending the conclusion of the inquiry or trial, and, if the property is subject to speedy and natural decay, or if it is otherwise expedient so to do, the Court may, after recording such evidence as it thinks necessary, order it to be sold or otherwise disposed of.

Explanation.- For the purposes of this section," property" includes-



(a) property of any kind or document which is produced before the Court or which is in its custody,

(b) any property regarding which an offence appears to have been committed or which appears to have been used for the commission of any offence.

(2) The Court or the Magistrate shall, within a period of fourteen days from the production of the property referred to in sub-section (1) before it, prepare a statement of such property containing its description in such form and manner as the State Government may, by rules, provide.

(3) The Court or the Magistrate shall cause to be taken the photograph and if necessary, videograph on mobile phone or any electronic media, of the property referred to in sub-section (1).

(4) The statement prepared under sub-section (2) and the photograph or the videography taken under sub-section (3) shall be used as evidence in any inquiry, trial or other proceeding under the Sanhita.

(5) The Court or the Magistrate shall, within a period of thirty days after the statement has been prepared under sub-section (2) and the photograph or the videography has been taken under sub-section (3), order the disposal, destruction, confiscation or delivery of the property in the manner specified hereinafter.

503. Procedure by police upon seizure of property.-(1)

Whenever the seizure of property by any police officer is reported to a Magistrate under the provisions of this Code, and such property is not produced before a Criminal Court during an inquiry or trial, the Magistrate may make such order as he thinks fit respecting the disposal of such property or the delivery of such property to the person entitled to the possession thereof, or



if such person cannot be ascertained, respecting the custody and production of such property.

(2) If the person so entitled is known, the Magistrate may order the property to be delivered to him on such conditions (if any) as the Magistrate thinks fit and if such person is unknown, the Magistrate may detain it and shall, in such case, issue a proclamation specifying the articles of which such property consists, and requiring any person who may have a claim thereto, to appear before him and establish his claim within six months from the date of such proclamation."

7. It may also be relevant to refer to the judgment of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in the case of **Sunderbhai Ambalal Desai**, reported in **AIR 2003 SC 638**, wherein it was held as under:-

"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 application for return of such vehicles.

.....

21. However these powers are to be exercised by the concerned Magistrate. We hope and trust that the concerned Magistrate would take immediate action for seeing that powers under Section 451 Cr.P.C. Are properly and promptly exercised and articles are not kept for a long time at the police station, in any case, for not more than fifteen days to one month. This Object can also be achieved if there is proper supervision by the Registry of the concerned High Court in seeing that the rules framed by the High Court with regard to such articles are implemented properly."



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8. It may also be relevant to note that mere pendency of confiscation proceedings before the Collector is no bar to release the vehicle.¹ The same view was taken by the Allahabad High Court that pendency of confiscation proceedings shall not operate as bar against the release of vehicle seized under Section 60 of Excise Act².

9. Keeping in view the law laid down by the Supreme Court and the documents/facts which would *prima facie* show that Revision Petitioner is the lawful owner of seized vehicle, this Court takes judicial notice that if vehicle in the present case is allowed to be kept in the custody which are normally kept in open yard, thereby exposed to vagaries of weather, resulting in diminishing its value and may well in course of time be reduced to scrap.

10. In view thereof, impugned order dated 27.09.2024 passed by District Munsif cum Judicial Magistrate Court, Papanasam, Thanjavur District in Crl.M.P.No.2577 of 2024, is set aside and the seized vehicle viz., Bajaj Pulsar 125 two wheeler, bearing Registration No.TN 68 AM 2738, is directed to be released to petitioner subject to the following conditions:

1. Jai Prakash Vs. State of U.P., 1992 AWC 1744

2. Kamaljeet Singh Vs. State of U.P., 1986 U.P. Cri. Ruling 50 (All)



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(i) Petitioner shall execute a personal bond for a sum of Rs.1,00,000/-

(Rupees One Lakh only) with two sureties each for a like sum to the satisfaction of the District Munsif cum Judicial Magistrate Court, Papanasam, Thanjavur District.

(ii) Vehicle shall be released after preparing a video and still photographs of the vehicle and after obtaining all information/documents necessary for identification of the vehicle.

(iii) Petitioner shall not sell or part with the ownership of the vehicle till conclusion of the trial and shall furnish an undertaking to the trial court that he shall surrender the vehicle within one week of being so directed.

(iv) Petitioner shall give an undertaking before respondent/authority concerned stating that he will not use the vehicle in question for any illegal activities in future and shall produce the same as and when required by respondent Police and also the trial Court, failing which the respondent/trial Court is/are at liberty to confiscate the vehicle.

(v) Petitioner undertakes to co-operate in confiscation proceedings, if any, initiated/to be initiated.



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(vi) Petitioner is also directed to participate in the enquiry to be conducted by the respondent Police.

(vii) Petitioner shall surrender the original R.C. Book before District Munsif cum Judicial Magistrate Court, Papanasam, Thanjavur District.

(viii) Petition relating to return of R.C. Book for any purpose in the future may be filed before District Munsif cum Judicial Magistrate Court, Papanasam, Thanjavur District, who may consider the same on merits, though this order has been passed by the High Court.

11. In the result, this Criminal Revision Petition is **disposed of** in the above terms.

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Internet:yes/No
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MOHAMMED SHAFFIQ,J.

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To

1.The District Munsif cum Judicial
Magistrate Court, Papanasam, Thanjavur
District.

2.The Inspector of Police,
Papanasam Police Station,
Thanjavur District.

3.The Additional Public Prosecutor,
Madurai Bench of Madras High Court,
Madurai.

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