



Crl.R.C.(MD)No.1230 of 2025

BEFORE THE MADURAI BENCH OF MADRAS HIGH COURT

DATED: 15.12.2025

CORAM:

THE HON'BLE MR.JUSTICE **MOHAMMED SHAFFIQ**

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Rajan Chellappa

... Petitioner

Vs

The State of Tamil Nadu,
Rep. by the Inspector of Police,
Nilakkottai Police Station,
Dindigul District.
(In Crime No. 31/2017).

... Respondent

Prayer: This Criminal Revision Case filed under Section 438 r/w 442 of BNSS to call for the records and set aside the order made in CrI.M.P.No.800/2025 dated 19.08.2025 on the file of Judicial Magistrate Court, Nilakkottai.

For Petitioner : Mr.V.P.Rajan,

For Respondent : Mr.A.Thiruvadi Kumar
Additional Public Prosecutor

ORDER

Heard Mr.V.P.Rajan, learned Counsel for Revision Petitioner and Mr.A.Thiruvadi Kumar, learned Additional Public Prosecutor for Respondent.



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2. The present Criminal Revision Petition has been filed to set aside the order of Judicial Magistrate Court, Nilakkottai, dated 19.08.2025 in Crl.M.P.No. 800/2025, whereby the petition filed by petitioner under Section 503 and 497 of BNSS for interim custody of vehicle viz., SWARAJ 735 Tractor 2014, bearing Registration No.TN 79 A 0873, remanded in RPR No.68 of 2017, was rejected on the premise that RC book stands in the name of one Sakthivel and hence petitioner is not the owner of the vehicle and he has failed to establish his ownership by adducing any documents.

3. Mr.V.P.Rajan, learned Counsel for Revision Petitioner would submit that petitioner claims to be owner of the vehicle viz., SWARAJ 735 Tractor 2014, bearing Registration No.TN 79 A 0873, who has purchased the same from one K.Sakthivel on 15.01.2017. The said vehicle was seized by the Respondent Police and a case was registered in Crime No.31 of 2017, dated 23.02.2017 for offence Section 379 of IPC alleging that petitioner was illegally transporting one unit of river sand from Vaigai bedrock. The Petitioner has filed Crl.MP.No. 800 of 2025 before the Judicial Magistrate, Nilakottai, to grant interim custody of the said vehicle and the said petition was dismissed by the court below by the impugned order dated 19.08.2025 for the reasons stated supra. Hence, this Criminal Revision Case has been filed.



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4. Learned Counsel for Petitioner would further submit that petitioner is the lawful owner and that he would abide by any conditions that may be imposed by this Court. In support thereof, he produced the Registration Certificate of the said vehicle before this Court, whereby ownership of the vehicle is transferred in the name of petitioner and the same was perused by Mr.A.Thiruvadi Kumar, learned Additional Public Prosecutor appearing for the respondent who confirmed that R.C book of the subject vehicle stands in the name of petitioner.

5. Learned Additional Public Prosecutor 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 the learned counsel for the 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.



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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



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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."

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.

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 (Alld)



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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 19.08.2025 passed by Judicial Magistrate, Nilakottai in Crl.M.P.No.800 of 2025, is set aside and the seized vehicle viz., SWARAJ 735 Tractor 2014, bearing Registration No.TN 79 A 0873, is directed to be released to petitioner subject to the following conditions:

(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 Judicial Magistrate Court, Nilakkottai.

(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.



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(iv) Petitioner shall give an undertaking before respondents/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 is also directed to participate in the enquiry to be conducted by the respondent Police.

(vi) Petitioner shall surrender the original R.C. Book before Judicial Magistrate, Nilakottai.

(viii) Petition relating to return of R.C. Book for any purpose in the future may be filed before Judicial Magistrate, Nilakottai, 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.

15.12.2025

Index :yes/No
Internet:yes/No
Nsr



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To:

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- 1.The Judicial Magistrate Court, Nilakkottai.
2. The State of Tamil Nadu,
Rep. by the Inspector of Police,
Nilakkottai Police Station,
Dindigul District.
- 3.The Additional Public Prosecutor,
Madurai Bench of Madras High Court,
Madurai.



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MOHAMMED SHAFFIQ,J.

Nsr

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