

IN THE COURT OF THE JUDICIAL MAGISTRATE No. I, METTUR

Present: N.Gopalakrishnan, B.Sc, B.L., Judicial Magistrate No. I, Mettur.

Monday, 6th day of April, 2026

CrI.M.P. No. 109 of 2026

Saravanan S/o.Ponnusamy **Petitioner / Owner of the property**

//Vs//

The Inspector of Police, Kolathur P.S. in **Cr. No.36/2026,**

u/s 303(2) of BNSS and S. 21(1) MMDR Act.

.... **Respondent / Complainant**

This petition under section **497 of BNS** return of property to the petitioner, filed on **05.02.2026** and came upon today **06.04.2026**, and Advocate **G.Ramachandran** appeared for the Petitioner and learned Assistant Public Prosecutor **Mr.V.Shanmughasundaram** appeared for the respondent, which are stood over for the consideration till today, this Court delivers the following,

ORDER

1. The petitioner has filed the present petition under **Section 497 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023**, seeking interim custody of an **FORD 3610 Tractor, bearing Registration No. TN.34.B.5807**, which has been produced before this Court in **C.P. No. 13 of 2026(Item No.1)**.

2. **The reply filed by the respondent in brief:** It is submitted by the

CrI.M.P. No.109 of 2026

respondent that the investigation is pending. If this vehicle is handed over to the petitioner, he may try to use the vehicle for the same kind of offence. This property has to be marked as prosecution side material object during the trial. Hence, the prosecution strongly opposes this petition.

3. Both sides were heard. Records perused.
4. **The contention of the Petitioner:** The petitioner further submits that, if the property belongs to him remains in the custody of the Court or the police, it will remain idle and may rust, thereby causing loss and hardship to the petitioner. It is further submitted that the said property is necessary for the petitioner's day-to-day use and livelihood. The petitioner has also expressed willingness to furnish sufficient sureties and to comply with any conditions that may be imposed by this Court.
5. **Further, the original Registration Certificate (RC) book, produced for comparison and found in the name of the petitioner. The learned counsel further contended that the subject vehicle was engaged by the accused for a specific land development activity situated within private patta land. It is the specific case of the petitioner that the vehicle has no nexus with the alleged crime. Counsel submitted that the continued detention of the vehicle in an idle state, without any valid legal**

justification, is causing undue hardship to the petitioner and resulting in the rapid deterioration of the vehicle's utility.

6. It is also submitted by the learned Assistant Public Prosecutor that the investigation in this case is still pending, if the property is handed over to the petitioner, she will not produce the same at the time of trial.

7. This Court finds it pertinent to rely on the principles established by the Honourable Supreme Court in **Sunderbhai Ambalal Desai v. State of Gujarat, (2002) 10 SCC 283**. The apex court observed that no purposeful object is served by retaining seized vehicles at police stations for extended periods. Consequently, the Magistrate is mandated to pass immediate orders for the release of such vehicles upon the execution of an appropriate bond, guarantee, and sufficient security to ensure their production when required. Furthermore, as a prerequisite for the delivery of possession, clear photographs of the vehicle must be captured and a comprehensive panchnama must be prepared.

8. In light of the above-mentioned judgment of the Honourable Supreme Court, it is crystal clear that there is no absolute bar on handing over the seized vehicle to an owner, provided that such release is made under appropriate circumstances and subject to suitable conditions imposed by the

Court.

9. It is further seen that if the property remains unused for a long period, it is likely to become defective, and its value would considerably diminish. It is also pertinent to note that the said property is essential for the petitioner's day-to-day use and for earning his livelihood.

10. Upon reviewing the contentions from both sides, this court finds it highly pertinent to cite the judgment of our Honourable Madras High Court in the case of **Annadurai v. State, CrI.O.P.Nos.646, 661, 668, 681 & 1146 of 2024**. In this case, our Honorable High Court has comprehensively summarized the legal position regarding the disposal of vehicles under the Mines Minerals Act. In view of the judgment of the Honourable Madras High Court in **Annadurai v. State, CrI.O.P.Nos.646, 661, 668, 681 & 1146 of 2024**, it is crystal clear that this Court is empowered to entertain and decide an application for the interim release of a vehicle seized under the provisions of the **Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957**, until confiscation proceedings are actually initiated by the competent authority.

11. This court is of the further opinion that this Court has also taken into consideration the following relevant facts, which are just and necessary in

the proper decision in this petition:

- a) Upon a perusal of the records, no complaint been preferred by the authorized officer as contemplated under **Section 223(1) of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 read with Section 22 of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957.**
- b) Furthermore, this Court observes that no application for confiscation has been moved under **Section 21(4A) of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957**, and the same remains unfiled as of this day.
- c) In the absence of such a complaint, this Court is not competent to take cognizance of the offence under Section 21(1) of the Act. Consequently, the power of confiscation contemplated under Section 21(4-A) cannot be invoked, as the said provision operates only when the Court is competent to take cognizance under Section 21(1) on a valid complaint by the authorised officer.
- d) Therefore, in view of the foregoing reasons confiscation proceedings cannot be initiated in a police-registered case, since the police are not empowered to register an FIR or file a final report for offences under

the MMDR Act.

- e) In light of the aforementioned facts, the question of confiscation does not arise at this juncture. Consequently, the possibility of future confiscation cannot operate as a statutory bar to the release of the vehicle by way of interim custody to the rightful owner. Such custody may be granted upon the imposition of suitable conditions, which shall remain subject to revocation by this Court as and when necessitated by the exigencies of the case.
- f) Regarding the antecedents of the accused, it is observed that there are no adverse previous cases reported against him. The accused has expressed his willingness to furnish sufficient sureties to the satisfaction of this Court and has further undertaken to strictly abide by any conditions that may be imposed by this Court.

In view of the foregoing reasons and upon taking into consideration the facts and circumstances of the case, this Court is of the considered view that it would be just and proper to hand over the **FORD 3610 Tractor, bearing Registration No. TN.34.B.5807**, to the petitioner by way of interim custody.

The said custody shall remain **subject to revocation by this Court as and when necessitated by the exigencies of the case** and shall further be
CrI.M.P. No.109 of 2026

subject to the following conditions:

1. The petitioner shall execute a bond for a sum of **₹1,00,000/- (Rupees One Lakh only)** with two sureties for the like sum, to the satisfaction of this Court, for the interim release and production of the **FORD 3610 Tractor, bearing Registration No. TN.34.B.5807.**
2. The petitioner and the sureties shall produce valid proof of identity issued by a government authority. The sureties shall further produce documentary proof, such as a property tax receipt, bank statement, property document, solvency certificate, or any other statutorily recognised document, evidencing their sufficient means to stand as sureties for the said amount.
3. The petitioner shall cause colour photographs of the aforesaid properties to be taken from all possible angles. Two printed copies of the said photographs shall be produced before this Court, along with a digital copy recorded in a CD / DVD / Pen Drive. One set of the printed photographs shall be retained with the Court records, and the other set shall be kept in the case diary maintained by the respondent.
4. The Head Clerk of this Court is directed to physically verify the said properties with due care and caution and to compare them with the

photographs produced. After verification, the Head Clerk shall make an endorsement on the reverse side of each photograph stating —

“Compared and verified with the original; true photograph of the property produced,”

which shall be signed by the Head Clerk and countersigned by the petitioner.

5. The Head Clerk shall further prepare a **Panchanama** containing all identifying and specific details of the properties in **Judicial Form No.82** as prescribed under the **Criminal Rules of Practice, 2019**, and shall annex the same with the certified photographs.
6. **Further, the petitioner shall surrender the original Registration Certificate of the vehicle and it shall remain in the custody of this Court until further orders are passed.**
7. The petitioner shall not sell, pledge, transfer, or otherwise encumber the said properties in any manner whatsoever.
8. The petitioner shall not alter the structure, form, or colour of the properties and shall maintain them in good working condition.
9. The petitioner shall produce the properties before this Court as and when

required.

10.The petitioner shall not use the said properties for any unlawful or illegal purpose.

11.Accordingly, this petition is allowed.

Directly dictated to Steno Typist, typed by him in the Computer and corrected by me and pronounced by me in open court on **6th day of April 2026.**

Judicial Magistrate No.I, Mettur.