

M. C. Mehta

Vs

Union of India and Others

Writ Petition (C) No. 13029 of 1985

(Dr. A.S. Anand, B.N. Kirpal, V.N. Khare JJ)

22.09.1998

ORDER

1. With a view to tackle problems arising out of chaotic traffic conditions and vehicular pollution and not being satisfied with the steps taken by the authorities concerned in addressing themselves to those problems, this Court issued certain directions accepting the report of the Bhure Lal Committee, as it was felt by the Court that any further delay in the performance of its duty by the administration could not be permitted. At this stage, we are concerned only with the direction issued by this Court to the effect that all commercial vehicles which are more than 15 years' old shall not be permitted to ply in the national capital territory of Delhi with effect from 2-10-1998.

2. An affidavit has been filed by Shri S. Raghunathan, Principal Secretary-cum-Commissioner, Transport, Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi on 28-8-1998. The learned Solicitor General appearing for the Administration submits that phasing out and banning all commercial vehicles which are more than 15 years' old by 2-10-1998 would lead to great hardship to the owners of those vehicles in particular and to the general public which makes use of those vehicles in general. It is, therefore, submitted by him that we may relax the rigour of the order regarding banning of 15-year-old commercial/transport vehicles with effect from 2-10-1998 and he assures the Court that the Administration itself is keen to phase out all such vehicles gradually to ease the pollution level in the city. It is submitted that the ban order may be applied in phases.

3. A chart has been filed by the learned Solicitor General giving a break-up of the count of the number of commercial/transport vehicles which have paid road tax at least once after 1-4-1997 yearwise. According to that chart, we find that the number of commercial/transport vehicles are :

#(a) More than 25 years' old 5718(b) Between 24 and 25 years' old 954(c) Between 23 and 24 years' old 635(d) Between 22 and 23 years' old 524(e) Between 21 and 22 years' old 748(f) Between 20 and 21 years' old 770##

4. Thus, the total number of vehicles which are more than 20 years' old are 9349. These vehicles are all commercial vehicles which have been registered and on which road tax has been paid.

5. The count of vehicles which are more than 15 years but less than 20 years' old are :

#(a) Between 17 to 19 years 3200(b) Between 15 to 16 years 4962##

6. To mitigate the hardship, as pointed out by learned Solicitor General and taking note of the assurance given by him, we modify our previous order and direct that :

(a) all commercial/transport vehicles which are more than 20 years' old (9349) shall be phased out and not permitted to ply in the national capital territory of Delhi after 2-10-1998;

(b) all such commercial/transport vehicles which are 17 to 19 years' old (3200) shall not be permitted to ply after 15-11-1998;

(c) such of the commercial/transport vehicles which are 15 years and 16 years' old (4962) shall not be permitted to ply after 31-12-1998.

7. This order shall apply to all commercial/transport vehicles whether registered in the national capital territory of Delhi or outside (but ply in Delhi) which are of more than the stipulated age.

8. This ban order shall also be applicable to all such vehicles which do not have any authority or permit to ply in the national capital territory of Delhi.

9. Apart from the commercial/transport vehicles which are registered, as noticed above, we are informed that there are vehicles which are either not registered or on which road tax has not been paid in the national capital territory of Delhi. We direct that all such commercial/transport vehicles which are being plied without payment of road tax or registration, shall not be allowed to ply in the national capital territory forthwith and in any event, not with effect from 2-10-1998.

10. The Motor Vehicles Department and the Traffic Department of the Delhi Police shall coordinate their efforts to carry out these directions faithfully and punctually.

11. We further direct that an affidavit shall be filed by the Chief Secretary, Delhi Administration, undertaking to ensure that the directions hereinabove given are carried out in letter and in spirit. The affidavit shall be filed during the course of this week.

12. The Transport Department and the Traffic Department of the Delhi Police shall submit reports of due compliance in the first week of October 1998, the third week of November 1998 and the first week of January 1999 with an advance copy to the learned amicus curiae.

13. List the matter in October 1998 on a date to be fixed by the Registry after consultation with the learned amicus curiae.