

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

DATED : 14.12.2018

CORAM:

THE HONOURABLE Mr. JUSTICE C.T.SELVAM
AND
THE HONOURABLE Mrs. JUSTICE S.RAMATHILAGAM

H.C.P.No.1889 of 2018

Padma

...Petitioner

-Vs-

1.The State of Tamil Nadu,
Rep. by its Secretary to Government,
Prohibition and Excise Department,
Fort St. George, Secretariat,
Chennai - 600 009.

2.The District Collector and District Magistrate,
Cuddalore District, Cuddalore.

... Respondents

PRAYER: Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India, to issue a Writ of Habeas Corpus, to call for the records relating to the detention order 24.07.2018 passed by the second respondent herein in his office proceedings No.C3/D.O./48/2018 as if he is a SAND OFFENDER and quash the same and direct the respondents herein to produce the petitioner's son namely Mohanraj @ Sekar, son of Jayavel aged about 29 years, residing at No.3/250, Murugal Koil Street, Pulavanur Post, Panruti Taluk, Cuddalore District, who is presently under going detention in the Central Prison, Cuddalore under Section 2(gg) of the Tamilnadu Prevention of Dangerous Activities of Bootleggers, Drug Offenders, Forest Offenders, Goondas, Immoral Traffic Offenders, Sand Offenders, Slum Grabeers and Video Pirates Act, 1982 (Tamilnadu Act 14 of 1982) before this Hon'ble Court and set him at liberty.

For Petitioner : Mr.D.S.Thiruma Valavan

For Respondents: Mr.R.Prathap Kumar
Additional Public Prosecutor

ORDER

[Order of the Court was made by C.T.SELVAM, J.]

The petitioner, who is the mother of the detenu herein, viz. Mohanraj @ Sekar, Son of Jayavel, aged 29 years. The detenu has been detained by the second respondent by his order in C3/D.O./48/2018, dated 24.07.2018, holding him to be a "SAND OFFENDER", as contemplated under Section 2(gg) of Tamil Nadu Prevention of Dangerous Activities of Bootleggers, Cyber Law Offenders, Drug Offenders, Forest Offenders, Goondas, Immoral Traffic Offenders, Sand Offenders, Sexual Offenders, Slum Grabbers and Video Pirates Act, 1982 (Tamil Nadu Act 14 of 1982). The said order is under challenge in this Habeas Corpus Petition.

2. The ground case has been registered against the detenu in Cr.No.373/2018 on the file of the Panruti Police Station, for offences u/s.294(b), 353, 430, 379, 307 IPC r/w 21(1) Mines and Minerals (Development & Regulation) Act 1957. The detention order has been passed by second respondent in C3/D.O./48/2018 on 24.07.2018.

3. We have heard learned counsel for the petitioner and learned Additional Public Prosecutor appearing for the respondents. We have also perused the records produced by the Detaining Authority.

4. Though several grounds have been raised in the Habeas Corpus Petition, the learned counsel appearing for the petitioner would mainly focus his argument on the ground that there is gross violation of procedural safeguards, which would vitiate the detention. The learned counsel, by placing authorities, submitted that the representation made by the petitioner was not considered on time and there was an inordinate and unexplained delay.

5. The learned Additional Public Prosecutor opposed the Habeas Corpus Petition. He would submit that though there was delay in considering the representation, on that score alone, the impugned detention order cannot be quashed. According to the learned Additional Public Prosecutor, no prejudice has been caused to the detenu and thus, there is no violation of the fundamental rights guaranteed under Articles 21 and 22 of the Constitution of India.

6. The Detention Order in question was passed on 24.07.2018. The petitioner made a representation, dated 20.08.2018 and the same was received on 27.08.2018. Thereafter, remarks were called for by the Government from the Detaining Authority on the same day. The remarks were duly received on 24.10.2018. Thereafter, the Government considered the matter and passed the order rejecting the petitioner's representation on 07.11.2018.

7. It is the contention of the petitioner that there was an inordinate delay of 58 days in submitting the remarks by the Detaining Authority, of which 21 days were Saturdays and Sundays and hence there was a delay of 37 days in submitting the remarks. Thereafter, there was yet another delay of 14 days in considering the representation, of which 6 days were Saturdays, Sundays and Government Holiday and hence there was a delay of 8 days in considering representation.

8. In *Rekha vs. State of Tamil Nadu*, reported in 2011 (5) SCC 244, the Honourable Supreme Court has held that the procedural safeguards are required to be zealously watched and enforced by the Courts of law and their rigour cannot be allowed to be diluted on the basis of the nature of the alleged activities undertaken by the detenu.

9. In *Sumaiya vs. The Secretary to Government*, reported in 2007 (2) MWN (Cr.) 145, a Division Bench of this Court has held that the unexplained delay of three days in disposal of the representation made on behalf of the detenu would be sufficient to set aside the order of detention.

10. In *Tara Chand vs. State of Rajasthan and others*, reported in 1980 (2) SCC 321, the Honourable Supreme Court has held that any inordinate and unexplained delay on the part of the Government in considering the representation renders the very detention illegal.

11. In the subject case, admittedly, there is an inordinate and unexplained delay of 37 days in submitting the remarks by the Detaining Authority and 8 days in considering the representation. The impugned detention order is, therefore, liable to be quashed.

12. In the result, the Habeas Corpus Petition is allowed and the order of detention in C3/D.O./48/2018, dated 24.07.2018, passed by the second respondent is set aside. The detenu, namely, Mohanraj @ Sekar, Son of Jayavel, aged 29 years, is directed to be released forthwith unless his detention is required in connection with any other case.

Sd/-
Deputy Registrar

//True Copy//

Sub Assistant Registrar

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To:

- 1.The Secretary to Government,
Prohibition and Excise Department,
Fort St. George, Secretariat,
Chennai - 600 009.
- 2.The District Collector and District Magistrate,
Cuddalore District, Cuddalore.
- 3.The Superintendent,
Central Prison, Cuddalore.
- 4.The Joint Secretary,
Public (Law and order) Department,
Secretariat, Chennai - 600 009.
- 5.The Public Prosecutor,
High Court, Madras.

+1cc to Mr.D.S.Thirumavalavan, Advocate Sr.87159

H.C.P.No.1889 of 2018

srg 25/01/2019