

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

DATED: 17.06.2019

Coram

The Hon'ble Mr. Justice M.M.SUNDRESH
and
The Hon'ble Mr. Justice M.NIRMAL KUMAR

H.C.P.No.503 of 2019

Sreekanth .. Petitioner

Vs

- 1.The Additional Chief Secretary to Government,
Home, Prohibition and Excise
Department, Secretariat,
Fort St. George, Chennai - 9.
- 2.The Commissioner of Police,
Greater Chennai, Vepery,
Chennai - 600 007
3. The Superintendent,
Central Prison, Puzhal,
Chennai - 600 066 .. Respondents

Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India praying for a writ of habeas corpus, to call for the entire records relating to the detention Order made in No.50/BCDFGISSV/2019 dated 06.02.2019 passed by the second respondent in detaining the detenu namely Srinivasa Rao, S/o Thiru.Koteeswara Rao, No.28/783, C-11, Lalitha Nagar, NGO's Cololny, Nandhiyal Taluk, Karnool District, Andhra Pradesh - 518 501 as "Goonda" under the Tamil Nadu Act 14 of 1982 and quash the same and further direct the respondents to produce the corpus of the detenu Srinivasa Rao, S/o Thiru.Koteeswara Rao, aged about 47 years who is detained at Central Prison, Puzhal, Chennai - 600 066 before this Court and set him at liberty.

For Petitioner .. Mr.D. Veerasekaran

For Respondents

.. Mr.R. Prathap Kumar
Addl. Public Prosecutor

ORDER

(Judgment of the Court was delivered by M.M.SUNDRESH, J.)

The petitioner's uncle viz., Srinivasa Rao, male, aged 47 years, S/o Koteeswara Rao 2 years, who is the detenu, has been detained by the second respondent by his order in Ref.50/BCDFGISSSV/2019 dated 06.12.2019 holding him to be a "BOOTLEGGER", as contemplated under Section 2(b) of Tamil Nadu Act 14 of 1982. The said order is under challenge in this Habeas Corpus Petition.

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

3. 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.

4. 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.

5. The Detention Order in question was passed on 06.02.2019. The petitioner made a representation on 25.02.2019. Thereafter, remarks were called for by the Government from the Detaining Authority on 28.02.2019. The remarks were duly received on 11.03.2019. Thereafter, the Government considered the matter and passed the order rejecting the petitioner's representation on 25.04.2019.

6. It is the contention of the petitioner that the remarks were received on 11.03.2019 and there was delay of 46 days in considering the representation by the Hon'ble Minister for Electricity, Prohibition and Excise Department after the Deputy Secretary dealt with it, of which 15 days were Government Holidays, hence, there was inordinate delay of 31 days in considering the representation.

7. In *Rekha vs. State of Tamil Nadu* (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.

8. In *Sumaiya vs. The Secretary to Government* (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.

9. 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.

10. In the subject case, admittedly, there is an inordinate and unexplained delay of 31 days in considering the representation by the Hon'ble Minister for Electricity, Prohibition and Excise Department. The impugned detention order is, therefore, liable to be quashed.

11. In the result, the Habeas Corpus Petition is allowed and the order of detention in Ref. 50/BCDFGISSV/2019 dated 06.02.2019 passed by the second respondent is set aside. The detenu, namely, Srinivasa Rao, S/o Thiru.Koteeswara Rao, aged about 47 years, is directed to be released forthwith unless his detention is required in connection with any other case.

Sd/-

Assistant Registrar(CS)

//True Copy//

Sub Assistant Registrar

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To

- 1.The Additional Chief Secretary to Government,
Home, Prohibition and Excise
Department, Secretariat,
Fort St. George, Chennai - 9.
 - 2.The Commissioner of Police,
Greater Chennai, Vepery,
Chennai - 600 007
 3. The Superintendent,
Central Prison, Puzhal,
Chennai - 600 066
 - 4.The Joint Secretary to Government, Public (Law and order)
Fort.St.George, Chennai 9.
 - 5.The Public Prosecutor,
High Court, Madras.
- +1cc to Mr. D. Veerasekaran, Advocate SR.No. 48911
H.C.P.No.503 of 2019
A.SK(12/07/2019)



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