

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

DATED: 04.11.2019

Coram

The Hon'ble Mr. Justice M.M.SUNDRESH
and
The Hon'ble Mr. Justice RMT. TEEKAA RAMAN

H.C.P. No. 1738 of 2019

Ravi

... Petitioner

-vs-

1.The District Collector and District Magistrate,
Villupuram District,
Villupuram.

2.The Principal Secretary to Government,
Home, Prohibition and Excise Department,
Fort St.George,
Chennai - 600 009.

... Respondents

Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India, to issue a Writ of Habeas Corpus directing the respondents herein to produce the detenue Tmt. Santhosam who is detained under Act 14/82 by the District Collector and District Magistrate, Villupuram District, Villupuram in his proceedings C2/18705/2019 dated 13.07.2019, who is now confined in the Special Prison for Women, Vellore before this Court and quash the same and set her at liberty.

For Petitioner : Mr.A.N.Rajan

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

ORDER

[Order of the Court was made by M.M.SUNDRESH, J.]

The petitioner is the husband of the detenue, Santhosam, W/o. Ravi, female, aged 43 years. The detenu has been detained by the first respondent by his order in R.C.No.C2/18705/2019 dated 13.07.2019, holding 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 13.07.2019. The petitioner made a representation on 20.07.2019. Thereafter, remarks were called for by the Government from the Detaining Authority on 05.08.2019. The remarks were duly received on 14.08.2019. Thereafter, the Government considered the matter and passed the order rejecting the petitioner's representation on 23.09.2019.

6. It is the contention of the petitioner that there was a delay of 9 days in submitting the remarks by the Detaining Authority, of which 3 days were Government Holidays and hence there was an inordinate delay of 6 days in submitting the remarks. It is the further contention of the petitioner that the remarks were received on 14.08.2019 and there was delay of 36 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 14 days were Government Holidays, hence, there was inordinate delay of 22 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 6 days in submitting the remarks and 22 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 R.C.No.C2/18705/2019 dated 13.07.2019, passed by the first respondent is set aside. The detenu, namely, Santhosam, W/o. Ravi, female, aged 43 years, is directed to be released forthwith unless her detention is required in connection with any other case.

Sd/-

Assistant Registrar (CS-)

// True Copy//

Sub Assistant Registrar

सत्यमेव जयते

mmi/ssm

To

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1.The District Collector and District Magistrate,
Villupuram District,
Villupuram.

2.The Principal Secretary to Government,
Home, Prohibition and Excise Department,
Fort St.George,
Chennai - 600 009.

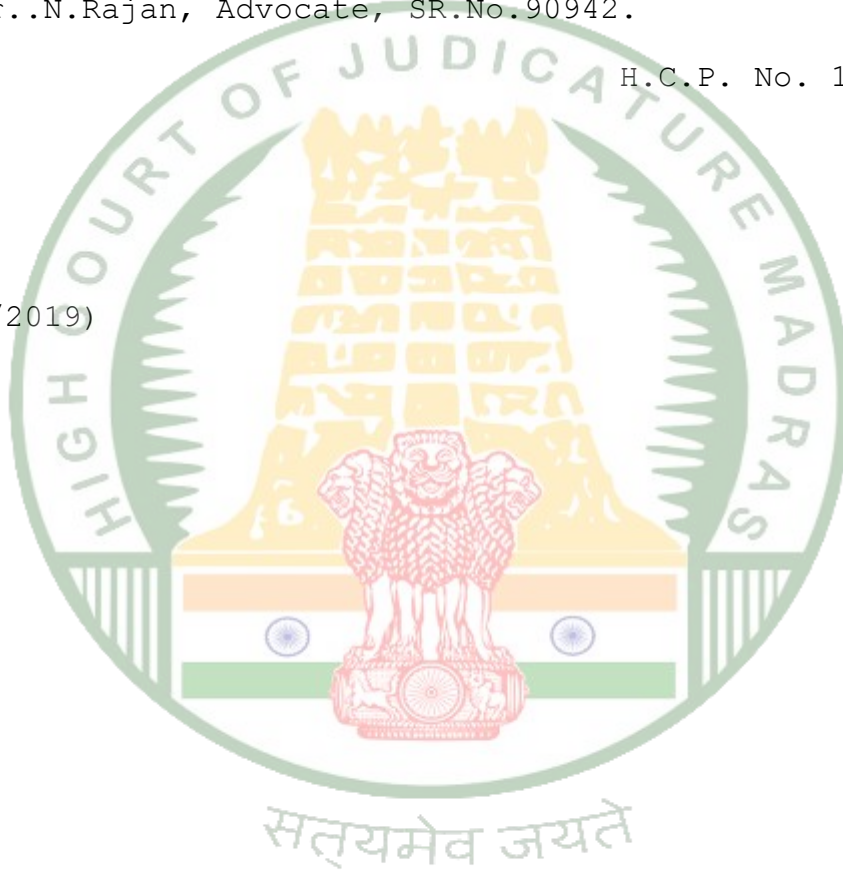
3.The Superintendent,
Special Prison for Women,Vellore.

4.The Additional Public Prosecutor,
High Court, Madras.

+1cc to Mr..N.Rajan, Advocate, SR.No.90942.

H.C.P. No. 1738 of 2019

RR(CO)
CSR(09/12/2019)



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