

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

DATED: 26.06.2020

Coram

The Hon'ble Mr. Justice M.M.SUNDRESH
and
The Hon'ble Mr. Justice D.KRISHNAKUMAR

H.C.P. No. 507 of 2020

Srinivasan
S/o.Rajaraman
No.3/74, Dharmaraja Koil Street
Kovur, Chennai - 600 092.

... Petitioner

-vs-

1.State of Tamil Nadu
Rep. By its Secretary to Government
Food and Consumer Protection Department
Secretariat, Chennai - 600 009.

2.The Commissioner of Police
Greater Chennai
Chennai - 600 007.

3.Additional Secretary to Government
Ministry of Consumer Affairs
Food and Public Distribution
(Department of Consumer Affairs)
Room No.270, Krishi Bavan
New Delhi - 110 001.

... Respondents

Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India to issue a writ of habeas corpus to call for the entire records, relating to petitioner's brother detention under Black Marketing and Maintenance of Supplies of Essential Commodities Act vide detention order, dated 06.02.2020 on the file of the second respondent herein made in proceedings No.01/2020 and quash the same as illegal and consequently, direct the respondents herein to produce the said petitioner's brother, namely, Thulasiraman (a) Sathishkumar, son of Rajaraman, aged 31 years, before this Court and set the petitioner's brother at liberty from detention, now petitioner's brother detained at Central Prison, Puzhal, Chennai - 600 066.

For Petitioner : Mr.C.C.Chellappan

For Respondents Mr.R.Prathap Kumar,
Addl. Public Prosecutor
: R1 & R2
Mr.G.Karthikeyan for R3

ORDER

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

The petitioner is the brother of Thulasiraman (a) Sathishkumar, son of Rajaraman, aged 31 years, who is the detenu. The detenu has been detained by the second respondent by his order in No.01/2020 dated 06.02.2020, holding him to be a "Black Marketeer" as contemplated under Section 3(2)(b) r/w 3(1) of the Prevention of Black Marketing and Maintenance of Supplies of Essential Commodities Act, 1980. 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 06.02.2020. The petitioner made a representation on 21.02.2020. Thereafter, remarks were called for by the Government from the Detaining Authority on 26.02.2020. The remarks were duly received on 02.03.2020. Thereafter, the Government considered the matter and passed the order rejecting the petitioner's

representation on 09.03.2020.

6. It is the contention of the petitioner that there was a delay of 5 days in submitting the remarks by the Detaining Authority, of which 2 days were Government Holidays and hence there was an inordinate delay of 3 days in submitting the remarks.

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 unexplained delay of 3 days in submitting the remarks, which caused delay in considering the representation by the Hon'ble Minister of Food and Civil Supplies. 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 No.01/2020 dated 06.02.2020, passed by the second respondent is set aside. The detenu, namely, Thulasiraman (a) Sathishkumar, son of Rajaraman, aged 31 years, is directed to be released forthwith unless his detention is required in connection with any other case.

Sd/-

Assistant Registrar (MDU)

//True Copy//

Sub Assistant Registrar

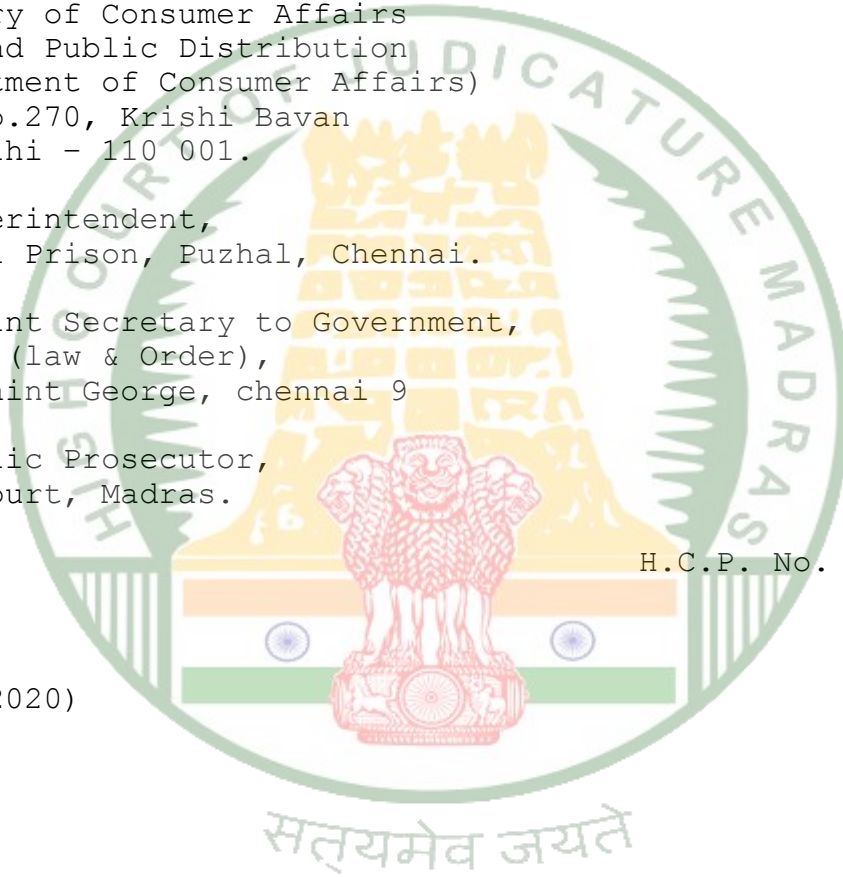
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To

- 1.The Secretary to Government
Food and Consumer Protection Department
Secretariat, Chennai - 600 009.
- 2.The Commissioner of Police
Greater Chennai
Chennai - 600 007.
- 3.The Additional Secretary to Government
Ministry of Consumer Affairs
Food and Public Distribution
(Department of Consumer Affairs)
Room No.270, Krishi Bavan
New Delhi - 110 001.
- 4.The Superintendent,
Central Prison, Puzhal, Chennai.
5. The Joint Secretary to Government,
Public (law & Order),
Fort Saint George, Chennai 9
- 6.The Public Prosecutor,
High Court, Madras.

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RLD(CO)
GN(30/07/2020)



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