

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

DATED: 11.11.2020

Coram

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

H.C.P. No. 898 of 2020

A.Reshma .. Petitioner/Wife of Detenue
.Vs.

1. The Secretary to Government,
Home, Prohibition and Excise Department,
Fort. St. George, Chennai - 600 009.
2. The District Collector and District Magistrate
of Vellore District, Vellore District,
Vellore - 632009.
3. The Superintendent of Police,
Vellore District.
4. The Superintendent of Prison,
Central Prison, Vellore.
5. The Inspector of Police,
Pallikonda Police Station,
Vellore District.

.. Respondents

Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India praying for a Writ of Habeas Corpus to call for the records related to the detention order dated 28.05.2020 passed by the second respondent herein in C3/D.O.No.49/2020 in TPDA No.7974 and quash the same and direct the respondents herein to produce the petitioner's husband namely S.Ebrahim, male, aged about 38 years residing at Chinna Anna Mesthri Street, Saidapet, Vellore District - 632012, who is presently undergoing detention in the Central Prison, Vellore under sub Section (1) of Section 3 of the 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 14/1982) before this Court and set him at liberty forthwith.

For Petitioner : Mr.J.Prakasam

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 wife of S.Ebrahim, S/o.Sulthan, male, aged about 38 years, who is the detenu. The detenu has been detained by the second respondent by his order in C3/D.O.No.49/2020 in TPDA No.7974 dated 28.05.2020, holding him to be a "Drug Offender", as contemplated under Section 2(e) 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 28.05.2020. The petitioner made a representation on 19.05.2020. Thereafter, remarks were called for by the Government from the Detaining Authority on 01.06.2020. The remarks were duly received on 15.07.2020. Thereafter, the Government considered the matter and passed the order rejecting the petitioner's representation on 27.07.2020.

6. It is the contention of the petitioner that there was a delay of 44 days in submitting the remarks by the Detaining

Authority, of which 12 days were Government Holidays and hence there was an inordinate delay of 32 days in submitting the remarks. It is the further contention of the petitioner that the remarks were received on 15.07.2020 and there was a delay of 9 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 2 days were Government Holidays, hence, there was inordinate delay of 7 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 32 days in submitting the remarks by the Detaining Authority and unexplained delay of 7 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 C3/D.O.No.49/2020 in TPDA No.7974 dated 28.05.2020, passed by the second respondent is set aside. The detenu, namely, S.Ebrahim, S/o.Sulthan, male, aged about 38 years, is directed to be released forthwith unless his detention is required in connection with any other case.

Sd/-
Assistant Registrar(Insp.Cell)

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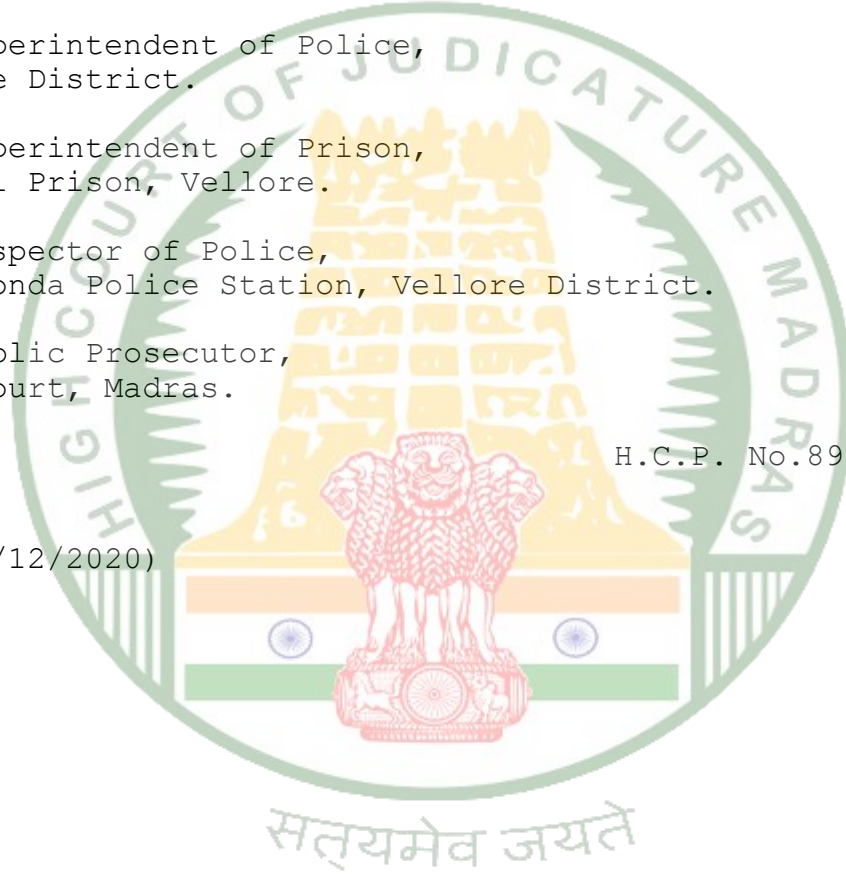
Sub Assistant Registrar

To

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High Court, Madras.

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