

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

DATED: 10.12.2020

CORAM

THE HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE M.M. SUNDRESH
AND
THE HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE D. KRISHNAKUMAR

H.C.P. No. 1233 of 2020

R.S. Pandian

..Petitioner

Vs.

1. State of Tamil Nadu,
rep. by the Secretary to Government,
Home, Prohibition and Excise Department,
Fort St. George, Chennai - 9.
2. The District Collector and
District Magistrate,
Erode District.
3. The Superintendent of Central Prison,
Coimbatore.
4. The Superintendent of Police,
Erode District.
5. The Inspector of Police,
Appakoodal Police Station,
Erode District.

..Respondents

Prayer: Petition under Article 226 of the Constitution of India praying for issue of a Writ of Habeas Corpus to call for the records relating to the detention order passed by the 2nd respondent in detention order in Cr.M.P. No.10/Goonda/2020/C1 dated 19.03.2020 and quash the same and direct the respondents to produce the detenu namely Mariyaragunath @ Ragu, S/o. Pandian aged about 31 years now detained at Central Prison, Coimbatore before this Hon'ble Court and set him at liberty.

For Petitioner :: Mr.B. Gopalakrishnan

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

O R D E R

(Order of the Court was made by M.M. SUNDRESH, J.)

The petitioner is the father of the detenu, Mariyaragunath @ Ragu, S/o. Pandian, aged about 31 years. The detenu has been detained by the second respondent by his order in Cr.M.P. No.10/Goonda/2020/C1 dated 19.03.2020 holding him to be a "Goonda", as contemplated under Section 2(f) 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. The learned counsel further submitted that there was a delay even in considering the earlier representation made on behalf of the detenu.

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. सत्यमेव जयते

5. The Detention Order in question was passed on 19.03.2020. The petitioner made a representation on 25.06.2020. Thereafter, remarks were called for by the Government from the Detaining Authority on 10.07.2020. The remarks were duly received on 19.08.2020. Thereafter, the Government considered the matter and passed the order rejecting the petitioner's representation on 04.09.2020.

6. It is the contention of the petitioner that there was a delay of 39 days in submitting the remarks by the Detaining Authority, of which 13 days were Government Holidays and hence there was an inordinate delay of 26 days in submitting the

remarks. It is the further contention of the petitioner that the remarks were received on 19.08.2020 and there was a delay of 13 days in considering the representation by the Hon'ble Minister for Electricity, Prohibition and Excise Department after the Deputy Secretary dealt with it out of which 4 days were Government Holidays, hence, there was inordinate delay of 9 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 26 days in submitting the remarks by the Detaining Authority and unexplained delay of 9 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 Cr.M.P. No. 10/Goonda/2020/C1 dated 19.03.2020 passed by the second respondent is set aside. The detenu, namely, Mariyaragunath @ Ragu S/o. Pandian aged about 31 years is directed to be released forthwith unless his detention is required in connection with any other case.

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Sd/-
Assistant Registrar(CS VII)

//True Copy//

Sub Assistant Registrar

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To

1. The Secretary to the Government,
Home, Prohibition and Excise Department,
Fort St. George, Chennai - 600 009.
2. The District Collector & District
Magistrate, Erode District.
3. The Joint Secretary to Government,
Public(Law & Order),
Fort Saint George, Chennai - 9.
4. The Superintendent of Central Prison,
Coimbatore.
5. The Superintendent of Police,
Erode District.
6. The Inspector of Police,
Appakoodal Police Station,
Erode District.
7. The Public Prosecutor,
High Court, Madras.

+1cc to Mr.S.Gunalan, Advocate Sr.40121

H.C.P. No. 1233 of 2020

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srg 08/01/2021

सत्यमेव जयते

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