

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

DATED: 03.06.2021

Coram

The Hon'ble Mr. Justice M.M.SUNDRESH  
and  
The Hon'ble Ms. Justice R.N.MANJULA

H.C.P. No.2243 of 2020

Gandhi

... Petitioner

-vs-

1. The Additional Chief Secretary to Government,  
Home Prohibition and Excise Department,  
Fort St.George, Chennai 600 009.
2. The District Collector and District Magistrate,  
Nagapattinam District. Nagapattinam.
3. The Superintendent of Police,  
Nagapattinam District,  
Nagapattinam.
4. The Superintendent,  
Central Prison, Thiruchirapalli.
5. The Inspector of Police,  
Prohibition Enforcement Wing, Mayiladuthurai,  
(I/C) Inspector of Police, Prohibition Enforcement Wing,  
Nagapattinam, Nagapattinam District. ... Respondents

Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India, to issue a Writ of Habeas Corpus to call for the records relating to the detention Order passed by the second respondent pertaining to the order made in C.O.C.No.53/2020 dated 09.10.2020 in detain the detenu under 2(b) of Tamil Nadu Act 14 of 1982, as a Boot-Legger and quash the same and direct the respondent to produce the detenu Jeeva S/o.Ramesh, aged about 27 years, who is detained at Central Prison, Thiruchirapalli before this Hon'ble Court and set him at liberty.

For Petitioner : Mr.G.Nirmal Krishnan

For Respondents : Mr.R.Muniyapparaj  
Government Advocate (Cr1. Side)

## ORDER

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

The petitioner is the mother of the detenu - Jeeva S/o.Ramesh, aged about 27 years. The detenu has been detained by the second respondent by his order in C.O.C.No.53/2020 dated 09.10.2020, 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 Government Advocate (Criminal Side) 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 Government Advocate (Criminal Side) 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 Government Advocate (Criminal Side), 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 09.10.2020. The petitioner made a representation on 15.12.2020. Thereafter, remarks were called for by the Government from the Detaining Authority on 17.12.2020. The remarks were duly received on 18.01.2021. Thereafter, the Government considered the matter and passed the order rejecting the petitioner's representation on 04.02.2021.

6. It is the contention of the petitioner that there was a delay of 32 days in submitting the remarks by the Detaining Authority, of which 14 days were Government Holidays and hence there was an inordinate delay of 18 days in submitting the remarks. It is the further contention of the petitioner that the remarks were received on 18.01.2021 and there was delay of 17 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 5 days were Government Holidays, hence, there was inordinate delay of 12 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 18 days in submitting the remarks and 12 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 C.O.C.No.53/2020 dated 09.10.2020, passed by the second respondent is set aside. The detenu, namely, Jeeva S/o.Ramesh, aged about 27 years, is directed to be released forthwith unless his detention is required in connection with any other case.

Sd/-  
Assistant Registrar(CO)

//True Copy//

Sub Assistant Registrar

mmi/Vv  
To

1. The Additional Chief Secretary to Government,  
Home Prohibition and Excise Department,  
Fort St.George, Chennai 600 009.

2. The Joint Secretary to Government,  
Public(Law & Order),  
Fort Saint George, Chennai - 9.
3. The District Collector and District Magistrate,  
Nagapattinam District. Nagapattinam.
4. The Superintendent of Police,  
Nagapattinam District,  
Nagapattinam.
5. The Superintendent,  
Central Prison, Thiruchirapalli.
6. The Inspector of Police,  
Prohibition Enforcement Wing, Mayiladuthurai,  
(I/C) Inspector of Police, Prohibition Enforcement Wing,  
Nagapattinam, Nagapattinam District.
7. The Public Prosecutor,  
High Court, Madras.

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