



WEB COPY

BEFORE THE MADURAI BENCH OF MADRAS HIGH COURT

DATED : 20.10.2021

CORAM:

THE HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE V. BHARATHIDASAN

and

THE HONOURABLE MRS.JUSTICE S.ANANTHI

H.C.P. (MD) No.714 of 2021

Rathika

... Petitioner / Wife of detenu

-VS-

- 1.The Secretary to the Government,
Home, Prohibition and Exercise Department,
Secretariat
Chennai-600 009.
- 2.The District Collector and District Magistrate,
Kanyakumari District at Nagercoil,
Kanyakumari District.
- 3.The Superintendent of Prison,
Central Prison,
Palayamkottai.
- 4.The Superintendent of Prison,
Central Prison-II,
Puzhal,
Chennai - 600 066

... Respondents

PRAYER : Petition is filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India praying for the issue of a Writ of Habeas Corpus, or any order or direction or to issue a Writ in the nature of Habeas Corpus, calling for the records pertaining to the impugned detention order passed by the 2nd respondent made in his proceedings P.D.No.13/2021 (Goonda) dated 25.03.2021 in detaining the detenu under Section 2(f) of the Tamilnadu Act 14 of 1982 as a Goonda and quash the same and direct the respondents to produce the detenu namely Merlin @ Merlin Raj Son of Selvam, male aged about 37 years, who is detained now in Central Prison-II, Puzhal, Chennai-66, before this Court and set him at liberty.

For Petitioner	:Mr.A.Joseph Jerry
For Respondents	:Mr.S.Ravi
	Addl.Public Prosecutor

O R D E R

(Order of the Court was made by V. BHARATHIDASAN, J.)

This Habeas Corpus Petition has been filed by wife of the detenu, namely, Merlin @ Merlin Raj, Son of Selvam, aged about 37

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years, challenging the detention order in P.D.No.13/2021, dated 25.03.2021, passed by the second respondent, branding him as "Goonda", as contemplated under Section 2(f) of Tamil Nadu Act 14 of 1982.

2. Even though the petitioner has raised several grounds to quash the impugned detention order, the learned counsel for the petitioner would mainly place arguments on the ground of delay in disposal of the petitioner's representation. In this regard, the learned counsel for the petitioner would state that the procedural safeguards guaranteed under Articles 21 and 22 of the Constitution of India have not been followed in this case and there is unexplained and inordinate delay in disposal of the petitioner's representation which would vitiate the impugned order of detention.

3. Mr.S.Ravi, the learned Additional Public Prosecutor, appearing for the respondents would state that after satisfying with the materials placed by the sponsoring authority, the detaining authority has passed the impugned detention order and therefore, there is no infirmity or illegality in the same. He would produce the proforma regarding the disposal of the petitioner's representation and would state that even if there is any delay in disposal of the petitioner's representation, it has not caused any prejudice to the rights of the detenu. Thus, he would pray for dismissal of this petition.

4. Heard the learned counsel for the petitioner as well as the respondents.

5. Perusal of the proforma furnished by the learned Additional Public Prosecutor appearing for the respondents would show that as against the impugned detention order, the petitioner made a representation to the first respondent dated 03.05.2021 and it was received on 06.05.2021. Remarks were called for on 06.05.2021 and it was received on 15.06.2021. The Deputy Secretary dealt with the matter on 17.06.2021. The concerned Minister dealt with the matter on 20.06.2021 and the representation came to be rejected on 26.07.2021. It is seen that in between 06.05.2021 and 15.06.2021, there was a delay of 39 days, after excluding the Government Holidays of 16 days, there was a delay of 23 days in considering the petitioner's representation.

6. At this juncture, it is useful to refer the decision of the Honourable Apex Court in the case of ***Rajammal vs. State of Tamil Nadu and another***, reported in **1999 (1) SCC 417**, wherein, the Apex Court has observed and held that it is for the Authority concerned to explain the delay, if any, in disposal of the representation and if any delay was caused on account of nay indifference or lapse in considering the representation, such delay will adversely affect further detention of the prisoner.



7. In the case on hand, as stated supra, the delay of 23 days in considering the representation of the petitioner remains unexplained by the respondents. Hence, in our considered view, the detention order is liable to be set aside solely on the ground of delay by following the above decision of the Apex Court.

8. In fine, the Habeas Corpus Petition is allowed. The detention order in P.D.No.13/2021, dated 25.03.2021, passed by the second respondent, is set aside. Consequently, the detenu, namely, Merlin @ Merlin Raj, S/o. Selvam, aged about 37 years, who is now detained at Central Prison, Palayamkottai, is directed to be released forthwith, unless his presence or custody or detention is required in connection with any other case.

Sd/-

Assistant Registrar (Per.Admn)

// True Copy //

/ /2021

Sub Assistant Registrar(CS)

MPK

Note :

In view of the present lock down owing to COVID-19 pandemic, a web copy of the order may be utilized for official purposes, but, ensuring that the copy of the order that is presented is the correct copy, shall be the responsibility of the advocate / litigant concerned.

To

- 1.The Secretary to the Government,
Home, Prohibition and Exercise Department,
Secretariat
Chennai-600 009.
- 2.The District Collector and District Magistrate,
Kanyakumari District at Nagercoil,
Kanyakumari District.
- 3.The Superintendent of Prison,
Central Prison,
Palayamkottai.
- 4.The Superintendent of Prison,
Central Prison-II,
Puzhal,
Chennai - 600 066



5.The Joint Secretary to Government,
Public (Law and Order),
Fort. St.George,
Chennai-9

6.The Additional Public Prosecutor,
Madurai Bench of Madras High Court,
Madurai.

ORDER MADE IN
H.C.P. (MD) No.714 of 2021
20.10.2021

PS (CO)
GC/JGB(08.11.2021) 4P 7C