

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

DATED : 05.07.2022

CORAM:

THE HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE S.VAIDYANATHAN
AND
THE HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE A.D.JAGADISH CHANDIRA

H.C.P.NO.175 OF 2022

Kanthasamy

... Petitioner/Father
of the Detenue

.Vs.

1. The State of Tamil Nadu,
Rep. by the Secretary to Government,
Home, Prohibition and Excise Department,
Secretariat, Chennai - 600 009.
2. The District Collector and District Magistrate,
O/o. The District Collector and District Magistrate,
Mayiladuthurai District.
3. The Superintendent of Police,
O/o. The Superintendent of Police,
Mayiladuthurai District.
4. The Superintendent of Prison,
Central Prison,
Tiruchirapalli.
5. The Inspector of Police,
Mayiladuthurai Police station,
Mayiladuthurai District.

... Respondents

PRAYER:-

Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India to issue a writ of Habeas Corpus to call for the entire records connected with the detention order in C.O.C. No.27 of 2021 dated 21.12.2021 on the file of the respondent No.2 and quash the same as illegal and direct the respondents to produce the body or person of the petitioner's son namely Ranjith aged about 23 years son of Kanthasamy, now confined at Central Prison, Tiruchirapalli before this Court and set him at liberty forthwith.

For Petitioner : Mr.U.Kathiravan

For Respondents : Mr.M.Babu Muthumeeran
Additional Public Prosecutor

ORDER

(Hearing was made through Hybrid mode)

S.VAIDYANATHAN, J.,
and
A.D.JAGADISH CHANDIRA, J.,

The petitioner is the wife of detenu Ranjith, aged about 23 years son of Kanthasamy. The detenu has been detained by the second respondent by his order in C.O.C. No.27/2021 dated 21.12.2021, 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.

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 21.12.2021. The petitioner made a representation on 19.01.2022. Thereafter, remarks were called for by the Government from the Detaining Authority on 20.01.2022. The remarks were duly received on 01.02.2022. Thereafter, the Government considered the matter and passed the order rejecting the petitioner's representation on 18.04.2022.

6. It is the contention of the petitioner that there was a delay of 14 days in submitting the remarks by the Detaining Authority, of which 5 days were Government Holidays, hence there was a delay of 9 days in submitting the remarks. It is the further contention of the petitioner that the remarks were received on 01.02.2022 and there was an inordinate delay of 77 days in considering the representation by the Hon'ble Minister for Home, Prohibition and Excise (XV) Department after the Deputy Secretary dealt with it, of which 24 days were Government Holidays, hence, there was inordinate delay of 53 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 9 days in submitting the remarks by the Detaining Authority and unexplained delay of 53 days in considering the representation by the Hon'ble Minister for Home, Prohibition and Excise (XV) Department. The impugned detention order is, therefore, liable to be quashed.

In the result, the Habeas Corpus Petition is allowed and the order of detention in C.O.C. No.27/2021 dated 21.12.2021, passed by the second respondent is set aside. The detenu, viz., Ranjith, aged about 23 years, son of Kanthasamy, is directed to be released forthwith unless his detention is required in connection with any other case.

Sd/-
Assistant Registrar(CS VIII)

//True Copy//

Sub Assistant Registrar

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To

1. The Secretary to Government,
Home, Prohibition and Excise Department,
Secretariat, Chennai - 600 009.
2. The District Collector and District Magistrate,
O/o. The District Collector and District Magistrate,
Mayiladuthurai District.
3. The Superintendent of Police,
O/o. The Superintendent of Police,
Mayiladuthurai District.
4. The Superintendent of Prison,
Central Prison, Tiruchirapalli.
5. The Inspector of Police,
Mayiladuthurai Police station,
Mayiladuthurai District.
6. The Public Prosecutor,
High Court, Madras.

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SR-II(CO)
PBS/11/07/2022