



HCP(MD)No.389 of 2022

BEFORE THE MADURAI BENCH OF MADRAS HIGH COURT

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DATED: 16.09.2022

CORAM

THE HON'BLE MRS JUSTICE J. NISHA BANU
AND
THE HON'BLE MR JUSTICE N. ANAND VENKATESH

H.C.P.(MD)No.389 of 2022

Wilbert Prabu

... Petitioner / Detenue

Vs.

1.State of Tamil Nadu,
Rep. by the Principal Secretary to Government,
Home, Prohibition and Excise Department,
Secretariat,
Chennai-600 009.

2.The District Collector and District Magistrate,
Tirunelveli District,
Tirunelveli.

3.The Superintendent of Prison,
Central Prison,
Palayamkottai,
Tirunelveli.

...Respondents

PRAYER: Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India to issue a Writ of Habeas Corpus, calling for the entire records connected with the detention order passed in M.H.S.Confdl.No.16 of 2022 dated 07.02.2022 on the file of the 2nd respondent herein and quash the same and



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direct the respondents to produce the detenu or body of the detenu namely Wilbert Prabu, aged about 39 years, S/o.Antony Pillai, now detained at the Central Prison, Palayamkottai, before this Court and set him at liberty forthwith.

For Petitioner : Mr.N.Pragalathan

For Respondents : Mr.A.Thiruvadi Kumar

Additional Public Prosecutor

ORDER

J. NISHA BANU,J.

and

N. ANAND VENKATESH,J.

The petitioner is the detenu viz., Wilbert Prabu, aged about 39 years, S/o.Antony Pillai. The detenu has been detained by the second respondent by his order in M.H.S.Confdl.No.16 of 2022 dated 07.02.2022 holding him to be a "Sexual Offender", as contemplated under Section 2(ggg) 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 strongly opposed the Habeas Corpus Petition by filing his counter. 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.



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5.The learned Additional Public Prosecutor, on instructions, submitted that the investigation was completed and final report was filed and it was taken on file by the Special Court for POCSO Act cases, Tirunelveli, in Spl.S.C.No.42 of 2022. It was further submitted that already 18 witnesses have been examined and the case stands posted for hearing on 19.09.2022.

6.The Detention Order in question was passed on 07.02.2022. The petitioner made a representation dated 03.03.2022. Thereafter, remarks were called for by the Government from the Detaining Authority on 09.03.2022. The remarks were duly received on 06.05.2022. Thereafter, the Government considered the matter and passed the order rejecting the petitioner's representation on 10.05.2022.

7.It is the contention of the petitioner that there was a delay of 57 days in submitting the remarks by the Detaining Authority, of which 19 days were Government holidays and hence, there was an inordinate delay of 38 days in submitting the remarks.



8.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.

9.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.

10.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.

11.In the subject case, admittedly, there is an inordinate and

unexplained delay of 38 days in submitting the remarks by the Detaining Authority. The impugned detention order is, therefore, liable to be quashed.



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12.In the result, the Habeas Corpus Petition is allowed and the order of detention in M.H.S.Confdl.No.16 of 2022 dated 07.02.2022 passed by the second respondent is set aside. The detenu, viz., Wilbert Prabu, aged about 39 years, S/o.Antony Pillai, is directed to be released forthwith unless his detention is required in connection with any other case.

(J.N.B.,J.) (N.A.V.,J.)
16.09.2022

Index : Yes/No
Internet : Yes
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To:

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1. The Principal Chief Secretary to Government,
Home, Prohibition and Excise Department,
Secretariat,
Chennai-600 009.
2. The District Collector and District Magistrate,
Tirunelveli District,
Tirunelveli.
3. The Superintendent of Prison,
Central Prison,
Palayamkottai,
Tirunelveli.
4. The Additional Public Prosecutor,
Madurai Bench of Madras High Court,
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