



HCP(MD)No.817 of 2022

BEFORE THE MADURAI BENCH OF MADRAS HIGH COURT

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DATED: 28.10.2022

CORAM

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

H.C.P.(MD)No.817 of 2022

Muralitharan

... Petitioner / Detenu

Vs.

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

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

3.The Superintendent of Prison,
Central Prison,
Madurai,
Madurai District.

...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 Detention Order No.31/2022 dated 23.04.2022



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on the file of the 2nd respondent herein and quash the same and direct the respondents to produce the detenu or body of the detenu namely Muralitharan, aged about 41 years, S/o.Thangaraj, now detained at the Central Prison, Madurai, 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., Muralitharan, aged about 41 years, S/o.Thangaraj. The detenu has been detained by the second respondent by his order in Detention Order No.31/2022 dated 23.04.2022 holding him to be a "Drug Offender", as contemplated under Section 2(e) 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 a final report was filed on 13.09.2022 before the NDPS Court, Madurai and the same was taken on file in Spl.C.C.No.134 of 2022. It was further submitted that the case is posted on 16.11.2022 for serving copies to the accused person/s under 207 of Cr.P.C.

6.It is brought to our notice that the final report has been filed within the time and hence, even though the detention order is quashed, the detenu has to independently file bail application before the concerned Court, which will be dealt with in accordance with law.

7.The Detention Order in question was passed on 23.04.2022. The petitioner made a representation dated 13.05.2022. The representation was received on 23.05.2022. The file was submitted on 03.06.2022. Thereafter, the Government considered the matter and passed the order rejecting the petitioner's representation on 14.06.2022.



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8.It is the contention of the petitioner that there was a total delay of 16 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, 4 days were Government Holidays and hence, there was inordinate delay of 12 days in considering the representation.

9.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.

10.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.

11.In **Tara Chand vs. State of Rajasthan and others**, reported in **1980 (2) SCC 321**, the Honourable Supreme Court has held that any



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inordinate and unexplained delay on the part of the Government in considering the representation renders the very detention illegal.

12.In the subject case, admittedly, there is an inordinate and unexplained delay of 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.

13.In the result, the Habeas Corpus Petition is allowed and the order of detention in Detention Order No.31/2022 dated 23.04.2022 passed by the second respondent is set aside. The detenu, viz., Muralitharan, aged about 41 years, S/o.Thangaraj, 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.)
28.10.2022

Index : Yes/No
Internet : Yes
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4. The Additional Public Prosecutor,
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