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**BEFORE THE MADURAI BENCH OF MADRAS HIGH COURT**

**DATED : 10.02.2022**

**CORAM:**

**THE HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE R.SUBRAMANIAN**

**and**

**THE HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE N.SATHISH KUMAR**

**H.C.P. (MD) No.1586 of 2021**

M.Alagumoorthy

... Petitioner/Detenue

Vs.

- 1.The Secretary to Government,  
Department of Co-operation,  
Food and Consumer Protection Department,  
2nd Floor, Namakkal Kavignar Maaligai,  
Secretariat,  
Chennai - 600 009.
- 2.The District Collector and District Magistrate,  
Virudhunagar,  
Virudhunagar District.
- 3.The Additional Secretary to Government of India,  
Ministry of Consumer Affairs,  
Food and Public Distribution,  
(Department of Consumer Affairs),  
Room No.270, Krishi Bavan,  
New Delhi - 110 001.
- 4.The Superintendent of Prison,  
Madurai Central Prison,  
Madurai 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 of the second respondent in Cr.M.P.No.12/2021 dated 04.10.2021 and quash the same and direct the respondents to produce the body or person of the detenu by name M.Alagumoorthy, S/o.Muthuramalingam, aged about 45 years, now confined at Madurai Central Prison, before this Court and set him at liberty forthwith.

For Petitioner : Mr.R.Alagumani

For Respondents : Mr.A.Thiruvadi Kumar  
Additional Public Prosecutor.



**O R D E R**

**R.SUBRAMANIAN, J.**  
**AND**  
**N.SATHISH KUMAR, J.**

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The petitioner is the detenu, namely, M.Alagumoorthy, S/o.Muthuramalingam, aged about 45 years. The detenu has been detained by the second respondent by his proceedings in Cr.M.P.No.12/2021 dated 04.10.2021 holding him to be a "Black Marketeer", as contemplated under the provision of Prevention of Black Marketing and Maintenance of Supplies of Essential Commodities Act, 1980 (Central Act No.7 of 1980) The said order is under challenge in this Habeas Corpus Petition.

2. We have heard the learned counsel 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 representations made by the petitioner were not considered on time and there was an inordinate and unexplained delay with regard to the same.

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 04.10.2021. The petitioner made a representation, dated 09.10.2021 and the same was received on 20.10.2021. Thereafter, remarks were called for by the Government from the Detaining Authority on 22.10.2021 and remarks were received on 03.11.2021, in which, there is a delay of 6 days excluding the Government Holidays of 4 days. Thereafter, the Deputy Secretary has dealt with the representation on 18.11.2021 and Minister for Food and Civil Supplies has dealt with the representation on 20.11.2021, in which, there is a delay of 7 days excluding the Government Holidays of 7 days. Ultimately, the petitioner's representation was rejected on 22.11.2021. Thus there is a delay of 13 days in considering the representation which remains unexplained.



6. In **Rekha vs. State of Tamil Nadu**, reported in 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.

7. In **Sumaiya vs. The Secretary to Government**, reported in 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.

8. 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.

9. In the subject case, admittedly, there is an unexplained delay of 13 days in considering the representation. The impugned detention order is, therefore, liable to be quashed.

10. In the result, the Habeas Corpus Petition is allowed and the order of detention in Cr.M.P.No.12/2021 dated 04.10.2021 passed by the second respondent is set aside. The detenu, namely, M.Alagumoorthy, S/o.Muthuramalingam, aged about 45 years, is directed to be released forthwith unless his detention is required in connection with any other case.

Sd/-

Deputy Registrar (A/Cs)

// True Copy //

/ /2022

Sub Assistant Registrar(CS)

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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

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Madurai Bench of Madras High Court,  
Madurai.

**H.C.P. (MD) No.1586 of 2021**  
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RD(01.03.2022) 4P 6C