



H.C.P.(MD) No.1972 of 2021

WEB COPY BEFORE THE MADURAI BENCH OF MADRAS HIGH COURT

DATED : 15.07.2022

CORAM:

**THE HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE P.N.PRAKASH
and
THE HONOURABLE MRS.JUSTICE R.HEMALATHA**

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Baladevi

... Petitioner

-VS-

- 1.The Government of Tamil Nadu
rep.by its Additional Chief
Secretary to Government
Home, Prohibition & Excise Department
Secretariat, Chennai-600 009
- 2.The District Collector and
The District Magistrate
Nagapattinam District
Nagapattinam
- 3.The Superintendent
Central Prison
Tiruchirappalli
Tiruchirappalli 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 in detention order in



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C.O.C.No.40/2021, dated 22.11.2021, on the file of the second respondent and quash the same and direct the respondents herein to produce the body of the petitioner's husband Kumar, aged about 41 years, son of Ramu, now confined in Central Prison, Thiruchirappalli, before this Court and set him at liberty forthwith.

For Petitioner : Mr.Sankara Pandian.J.

For Respondents : Mr.S.Ravi
Additional Public Prosecutor

ORDER

[Order of the Court was made by R.HEMALATHA, J.]

The petitioner is the wife of the detenu viz., Kumar, aged about 41 years, son of Ramu. The detenu has been detained by the second respondent by his order in C.O.C.No.40/2021, dated 22.11.2021, 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.



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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 a 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.

5. The detention order in question was passed on 22.11.2021. The petitioner made a representation on 10.12.2021. Thereafter, remarks were called for by the Government from the Detaining Authority on 16.12.2021. The



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remarks were duly received on 05.01.2022. 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 19 days in submitting the remarks by the Detaining Authority, of which 07 days were Government holidays and hence there was an inordinate delay of 12 days in submitting the remarks. It is the further contention of the petitioner that the remarks were received on 05.01.2022 and there was a delay of 101 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 35 days were Government holidays, hence, there was inordinate delay of 66 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.



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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 [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 07 days in submitting the remarks by the Detaining Authority and unexplained delay of 66 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.

In the result, the Habeas Corpus Petition is allowed and the order of detention in C.O.C.No.40/2021, dated 22.11.2021, passed by the second respondent is set aside. The detenu, viz., Kumar, aged about 41 years, son of



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Ramu, is directed to be released forthwith unless his detention is required in connection with any other case.

[P.N.P., J.]

[R.H., J.]

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Index : Yes / No

Internet : Yes / No

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To:

- 1.The Additional Chief
Secretary to Government,
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Secretariat, Chennai-600 009.
- 2.The District Collector and
The District Magistrate,
Nagapattinam District,
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Central Prison,
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- 4.The Additional Public Prosecutor,
Madurai Bench of Madras High Court,
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