



W.P(MD)No.13758 of 2023

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BEFORE THE MADURAI BENCH OF MADRAS HIGH COURT

DATED : 07.07.2023

CORAM :

THE HON'BLE MR.JUSTICE B.PUGALENDHI

W.P(MD) No.13758 of 2023

Kingsley Jebakumar Peter

Petitioner

Vs

1.The Regional Passport Officer,
Trichy - New Corporation Complex,
7th Cross Thillai Nagar,
Tiruchirappalli District.

2.The Inspector of Police,
Woraiyur Police Station,
Tiruchirappalli District.

Respondents

PRAYER:Writ Petitions filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India, praying for issuance of a Writ of Mandamus, directing the first respondent herein to renew the petitioner's passport by scrutinizing petitioner's application file No.TR2075352768123 and consider the petitioner's explanation dated 24.05.2023, within a time stipulated by this Court.

For Petitioner
For R1

:Mr.D.Balamuruga Pandi

:Mr.S.Paramasivam

Standing Counsel

For R2

:Mrs.D.Farjana Ghoushia

Special Government Pleader



W.P(MD)No.13758 of 2023

ORDER

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The petitioner's application for renewal of passport was not considered by the Passport Authority, on the ground that a First Information Report is pending as against this petitioner.

2.Mrs.D.Farjana Ghoushia, learned Special Government Pleader, who takes notice for the second respondent submits that a case in Crime No.407 of 2021 has been registered as against the petitioner for the offences punishable under Sections 292(A), 153, 504 IPC on 31.05.2021 on the file of the Uraiyur Police Station, Trichy and a Final report has also been filed and it was not taken on file.

3.Pendency of an FIR, by itself, cannot be a ground to refuse the passport. The Passport Authority can refuse the passport and any travel documents under Section 6 of the Passport Act, 1967. Section 6(2)(F) of the Act would be relevant and the same is extracted as under:-



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W.P(MD)No.13758 of 2023

“6.Refusal of passports, travel documents, etc-

...

(2)Subject to the other provisions of this Act, the passport authority shall refuse to issue a passport or travel document for visiting any foreign country under clause (c) of sub-section (2) of section 5 on any one or more of the following grounds, and on no other ground, namely -

...

(f) that proceedings in respect of an offence alleged to have been committed by the applicant are pending before a Criminal Court in India.”

4.The above provision enables the Passport Authority to refuse the passport or travel document to an applicant on the ground that proceedings in respect of an offence alleged to have been committed by the applicant is pending before a Criminal Court. Registration of an FIR on the police files, based on a complaint, cannot be construed as a proceedings pending before the Criminal Court.



W.P(MD)No.13758 of 2023

WEB COPY

5. Similarly, unless and until the Court takes cognizance of the final report filed by the Investigative Agency, it cannot be termed as a proceedings pending before the Criminal Court. ***In Re Narsingh Das Tapadia v. Goverdhan Das Partani & Another [(2000) 7 SCC 183]***, the Hon'ble Supreme Court has observed as follows:-

“8. "Taking cognizance of an offence" by the Court has to be distinguished from the filing of the complaint by the complainant. Taking cognizance would mean the action taken by the court for initiating judicial proceedings against the offender in respect of the offence regarding which the complaint is filed. Before it can be said that any Magistrate or Court has taken cognizance of an offence it must be shown that he has applied his mind to the facts for the purpose of proceeding further in the matter at the instance of the complainant. If the Magistrate or the Court is shown to have applied the mind not for the purpose of taking action upon the complaint but for taking some other kind of action contemplated under the Code Criminal Procedure such as ordering investigation under Section 156(3) or issuing a search warrant, he cannot be said to have taken cognizance of the offence.”



W.P(MD)No.13758 of 2023

WEB COPY

6.A Division Bench of this Court in *Arumugam v. Regional Passport Officer, Madurai* [W.A(MD)No.301 of 2018, dated 27.03.2018], has held as follows:-

“8. ... mere pendency of the criminal proceedings cannot be construed as pendency of the criminal proceedings. The decisions relied on for reaching the said conclusion in the above cited decision, would also disclose that unless cognizance is taken by the concerned Magistrate, it does not amount to pendency of the criminal proceedings. ...”

7.In fact, the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, has issued a Circular dated 10.10.2019, wherein, the following instruction was issued:-

“5. In view of the above, the following instructions may be adopted while processing the passport applications in respect of those applicants who may have criminal



W.P(MD)No.13758 of 2023

proceedings pending before a criminal court in India:

... (vi) ... It may be noted that mere filing of FIRs and cases under investigation do not come under the purview of Section 6(2)(f) and that criminal proceedings would only be considered pending against an applicant if a case has been registered before any Court of law and the court has taken cognizance of the same.”

Therefore, the Passport Authority is not justified in not deciding the application filed by the petitioner for renewal of passport by referring the criminal case.

8. Ordinarily, the duration of a passport as per Rule 12 of the Passport Rules is for a period of 10 years. In the event if the applicant is facing any criminal proceedings, the passport may be issued by restricting the period.

9. Accordingly, this writ petition is allowed with a direction to the Passport Authority to renew the passport to this



W.P(MD)No.13758 of 2023

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petitioner, by considering his application, within a period of twelve weeks from the date of receipt of a copy of this order. No costs.

07.07.2023

NCC : Yes / No.
Index : Yes / No.
Internet : Yes
vrn

To

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B.PUGALENDHI, J

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