



H.C.P.No.218 of 2024

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IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

DATED : 04.06.2024

CORAM :

THE HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE M.S. RAMESH
AND
THE HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE SUNDER MOHAN

H.C.P.No.218 of 2024

Venkatachalam

... Petitioner

Vs.

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

2.The District Collector and District Magistrate
of Cuddalore District
Cuddalore

3.The Superintendent of Police
Cuddalore District
Cuddalore

4.The Inspector of Police
Prohibition Enforcement Wing
Cuddalore

5.The Superintendent
Central Prison
Cuddalore

... Respondents



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PRAYER: Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India to issue a Writ of Habeas Corpus, calling for the entire records relating to petitioner's brother in law detention under Tamil Nadu Act 14 of 1982 vide detention order dated 03.01.2024 on the file of the second respondent herein made in proceedings C3/D.O./01/2024 and quash the same as illegal and consequently direct the respondents herein to produce the petitioner's brother in law namely Ramamoorthy, aged 43 years, son of Kaliyamoorthy, before this Court and set him at liberty, now petitioner's brother in law detained at Central Prison, Cuddalore.

For Petitioner : Mr.C.C.Chellappan

For Respondents : Mr.A.Gokulakrishnan
Additional Public Prosecutor
Assisted by Mr.C. Aravind

ORDER

M.S.RAMESH, J.
AND
SUNDER MOHAN, J.

The petitioner herein, who is the brother-in-law of the detenu viz. Thiru. Ramamoorthy, aged about 43 years, S/o.Kaliyamoorthy, has come forward with this petition challenging the detention order passed by the second respondent dated 03.01.2024 slapped on his brother-in-law, branding him as "Bootlegger" under the Tamil Nadu Prevention of



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Dangerous Activities of Bootleggers, Cyber Law Offenders, Drug Offenders, Forest Offenders, Goondas, Immoral Traffic Offenders, Sand Offenders, Sexual Offenders, Slum Grabbers and Video Pirates Act, 1982 [Tamil Nadu Act 14 of 1982].

2. Heard the learned counsel for the petitioner, as well as the learned Additional Public Prosecutor appearing for the respondents.

3. Though several grounds are raised in the petition, the learned counsel for the petitioner focused mainly on the ground that there is an unexplained delay in considering the representation of the petitioner, dated 29.01.2024. According to the learned counsel for the petitioner, though the representation is dated 29.01.2024, the same has been received by the Government only on 01.02.2024; the file has been dealt with by the Deputy Secretary on 02.02.2024 and the Minister concerned dealt with the file only on 11.02.2024 and the Rejection Letter was prepared on 12.02.2024 and sent to the detainee on 13.02.2024. It is the further submission of the learned counsel that the delay of 5 days in considering the representation remains unexplained and the same vitiates the detention order. In support



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of his contention, the learned counsel for the petitioner relied on the judgment of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in ***Rajammal Vs. State of Tamil Nadu, reported in (1999) 1 SCC 417.***

4. As per the submission of the learned counsel for the petitioner and on perusal of the records, we find that the representation of the petitioner is dated 29.01.2024, which was received by the Government on 01.02.2024 and further, the Minister concerned had dealt with the file of the detainee only on 11.02.2024 and the Rejection Letter was sent to the detainee on 13.02.2024. Thus, we find there is a considerable delay of 5 days in considering the representation of the petitioner. This delay of 5 days in considering the petitioner's representation remains unexplained.

5. It is a trite law that the representation should be very expeditiously considered and disposed of with a sense of urgency and without avoidable delay. Any unexplained delay in the disposal of the representation would be a breach of the constitutional imperative and it would render the continued detention impermissible and illegal. From the records produced, we find that no acceptable explanation has been offered



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for the delay of 5 days. Therefore, we have to hold that the delay has vitiated further detention of the detenu.

6. In the judgment of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in **Rajammal's case (cited supra)**, it has been held as follows:

"It is a constitutional obligation of the Government to consider the representation forwarded by the detenu without any delay. Though no period is prescribed by Article 22 of the Constitution for the decision to be taken on the representation, the words "as soon as may be " in clause (5) of Article 22 convey the message that the representation should be considered and disposed of at the earliest."

As per the dictum laid down by the Supreme Court in above cited **Rajammal's case**, number of days of delay is immaterial and what is to be considered is whether the delay caused has been properly explained by the authorities concerned. But, here the inordinate delay of 5 days has not been properly explained at all.

7. Further, in a recent decision in **Ummu Sabeena vs. State of Kerala-2011 STPL (Web) 999 SC**, the Hon'ble Supreme Court has held that



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the history of personal liberty, as is well known, is a history of insistence on procedural safeguards. The expression 'as soon as may be', in Article 22(5) of the Constitution of India clearly shows the concern of the makers of the Constitution that the representation made on behalf of the detenu, should be considered and disposed of with a sense of urgency and without any avoidable delay.

8. In the light of the above discussion, we have no hesitation in quashing the order of detention on the ground of delay on the part of the Government in disposing of the representation of the petitioner.

9. Accordingly, the detention order passed by the second respondent on 03.01.2024 in C3/D.O./01/2024, is hereby set aside and the Habeas Corpus Petition is allowed. The detenu viz., Thiru.Ramamoorthy, aged about 43 years, S/o.Kaliyamoorthy, is directed to be set at liberty forthwith, unless his confinement is required in connection with any other case.

[M.S.R., J] [S.M., J]
04.06.2024

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Secretariat, Chennai – 600 009

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of Cuddalore District
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6.The Public Prosecutor
High Court of Madras
Chennai 600 104



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