



HCP.No.1798 of 2024

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IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

DATED : 23.10.2024

CORAM :

THE HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE S.M.SUBRAMANIAM
AND
THE HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE V.SIVAGNANAM

H.C.P.No.1798 of 2024

B.Chitra

... Petitioner

Vs.

1.The Secretary to the Government,
Prohibition and Excise Department,
Fort St.George,
Chennai – 600 009.

2.The Commissioner of Police
Greater Chennai,
Vepery, Egmore,
Chennai.

3.The Inspector of Police, [L & O]
V-5, Thirumangalam Police Station,
Chennai.

4.The Superintendent of Prison,
Central Prison – II,
Puzhal, Chennai.

... Respondents



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PRAYER: Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India to issue a Writ of Habeas Corpus, directing the respondents to produce the Petitioner's Husband Mr.Balaji @ Kozhi Balaji, S/o.Thulasidoss, Male aged about 40 years and now confined at Central Prison-II Puzhal Chennai, before this Hon'ble Court and set him at liberty forthwith by setting aside the order of Detention bearing BCDFGISSSV.No.748/2024 dated 02.07.2024 on the file of the Second respondent and pass such further or other order or orders as may deem fit and proper circumstances of the case and thus render justice.

For Petitioner : Mr.A.Thirumaran

For Respondents : Mr.E.Raj Thilak
Additional Public Prosecutor

ORDER

(Order of the Court was made by *S.M.SUBRAMANIAM, J.*)

The order of detention passed by the 2nd respondent in proceedings BCDFGISSSV.No.748/2024 dated 02.07.2024 is sought to be quashed in the present Habeas Corpus Petition.

2. Heard the learned counsel for the petitioner and the learned Additional Public Prosecutor appearing for the respondents



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3. The order of detention sought to be assailed and the fact as narrated would reveal that, there is a delay of fourteen days in considering the representation. The delay in considering the representation and the period during which the detenu was under detention would be construed as violation of the Constitutional mandatory under Article 22 of Constitution of India and thus, the ground of delay in considering the representation became fatal in the case of preventive detention.

4. It is 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 for the inordinate delay. Therefore, we have to hold that the delay has vitiated further detention of the detenu.



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5. 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."

6.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 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 the history of personal liberty, as is well known, is a history of



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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 in BCDFGISSSV.No.748/2024 dated 02.07.2024, is hereby set aside and the Habeas Corpus Petition is allowed. The detenu viz., Mr. Balaji @ Kozhi Balaji, S/o. Thulasidoss, Male, aged about 40 years, now confined at Central Prison-II Puzhal, Chennai, is directed to be set at liberty forthwith, unless his confinement is required in connection with any other case.

10. It is needless to state that the bail application if any filed by the detenu is to be considered on its own merits and in accordance with law.



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The prosecution side is at liberty to object bail application or to seek conditions to be imposed if any required under the facts and circumstances.

[S.M.S., J.]

[V.S.G., J.]

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Index: Yes/No

Internet: Yes/No

Neutral Citation: Yes/No

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AND
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