



H.C.P.No.428 of 2025

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

DATED : 04.06.2025

CORAM :

THE HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE M.S. RAMESH

AND

THE HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE V. LAKSHMINARAYANAN

H.C.P.No.428 of 2025

Sathya

... Petitioner

Vs.

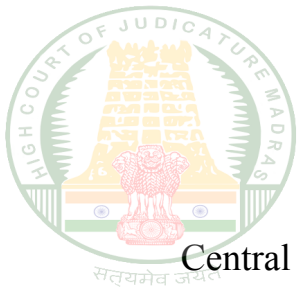
1.The Secretary,
Government of India,
Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and
Public Distribution (Department of Consumer Affairs),
Room No.270 Krishi Bhavan,
New Delhi – 110 001.

2.The Additional Chief Secretary,
Government of Tamil Nadu,
Co-operation, Food and Consumer Protection Department,
Secretariat, Fort St.George,
Chennai – 600 009.

3.The District Magistrate and District Collector,
Dharmapuri, Dharmapuri District.

4.The Inspector of Police,
Civil Supplies CID,
Dharmapuri.

5.The Superintendent of Prison,



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Central Prison, Salem.

... Respondents

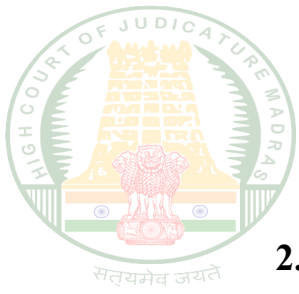
PRAYER: Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India to issue a Writ of Habeas Corpus, calling for the records pertaining to the order of detention passed by the third respondent in his proceedings in S.C.No.04/2025/C1 dated 08.02.2025 and quash the same as illegal and produce the detenu namely Muthu @ Korila Muthu, S/o.Solaithevar, aged about 48 years, now he is confined in Central Prison, Salem, before this Court and set him at liberty.

For Petitioner	: Mr.T.Leninkumar
For R1	: Mr.K.Ramanamoorthy
For R2 to R5	: Mr.E.Raj Thilak, Additional Public Prosecutor

ORDER

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

The petitioner herein, who is the wife of the detenu namely Muthu @ Korila Muthu, aged about 48 years, S/o.Solaithevar, has come forward with this petition challenging the detention order passed by the third respondent dated 08.02.2025 issued against her husband, branding him as "Black Marketeer" under the Prevention of Black Marketing and Maintenance of Supplies of Essential Commodities Act, 1980 (Central Act 7 of 1980).



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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 20.02.2025. According to the learned counsel for the petitioner, though the representation is dated 20.02.2025, the same has been received by the Government only on 24.02.2025; the file has been dealt with by the Secretary Law on 21.03.2025; the Minister concerned dealt with the file on 24.03.2025; the Rejection Letter was prepared on 24.03.2025 and was sent to the detenu on 24.03.2025. It is the further submission of the learned counsel that the delay of 20 days in considering the representation remains unexplained and the same vitiates the detention order. In support 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



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on perusal of the records, we find that the representation of the petitioner is dated 20.02.2025, which was received by the Government on 24.02.2025 and further, the Minister concerned had dealt with the file of the detenu only on 24.03.2025 and the Rejection Letter was sent to the detenu on 24.03.2025. Thus, we find that there is a delay of 20 days in considering the representation of the petitioner. This delay of 20 days in considering the petitioner's representation remains unexplained.

5. 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 delay of 20 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



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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 Hon'ble 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 20 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 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



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avoidable delay.

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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 detenu.

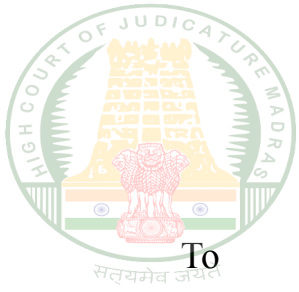
9. Accordingly, the detention order passed by the third respondent on 08.02.2025 in S.C.No.04/2025/C1, is hereby set aside and the Habeas Corpus Petition is allowed. The detenu viz., Muthu @ Korila Muthu, aged about 48 years, S/o.Solaithevar, is directed to be set at liberty forthwith, unless his confinement is required in connection with any other case.

[M.S.R, J.]

[V.L.N, J.]
04.06.2025

Index: Yes/No
Speaking order/Non-speaking order
Neutral Citation: Yes/No

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To

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Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and
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- 6.The Public Prosecutor,
High Court, Madras.
- 7.The Joint Secretary, Public (Law & Order),
Chennai – 600 009.



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and
V. LAKSHMINARAYANAN, J.

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