



H.C.P(MD)No.478 of 2025

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BEFORE THE MADURAI BENCH OF MADRAS HIGH COURT

DATED : 07.07.2025

CORAM:

**THE HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE A.D.JAGADISH CHANDIRA
and
THE HONOURABLE MS.JUSTICE R.POORNIMA**

H.C.P(MD)No.478 of 2025

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... Petitioner

Vs.

- 1.The Additional Secretary to the Government of India,
Ministry of Consumer Affairs,
Food and Public Distribution,
(Department of Consumer Affairs)
Room No. 270, Krishi Bhavan,
New Delhi – 110001.
2. The State of Tamil Nadu
Rep by its Secretary to the Government
Co-operation Food and Consumer Protection Department,
Secretariat,
Chennai – 600009.



H.C.P(MD)No.478 of 2025

WEB COPY

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

4.The Superintendent,
Central Prison,
Madurai 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 relating to the order of detention passed by the 3rd respondent in his proceedings in Detention Order No.03/2025 (CS) dated 03.04.2025 branding the petitioner's husband / Detenue namely, A.Ajmal Khan, S/o. Ahamed Kabeer aged about 45, as Black Marketeer, under the Prevention of Black Marketing and Maintenance of Supplies of Essential Commodities Act, 1980 (Central Act 7 of 1980) under section 3(2)(a) r/w 3(1) of the said Act and quash the same as illegal and direct the respondents to produce the detenue, who is confined in the 4th respondent's Central Prison, Madurai, before this Court and set him at liberty forthwith.



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For Petitioner : Mr. J.Lawrance

For Respondents : Mr.A.Thiruvadi Kumar

Additional Public Prosecutor

ORDER

[Order of the Court was made by **A.D.JAGADISH CHANDIRA, J.**]

The petitioner is the wife of the detenu viz., A.Ajmal Khan, S/o.Ahamed Kabeer, aged about 45 years. The detenu has been detained by the 3rd respondent by his proceedings in Detention Order No.03/2025(CS) dated 03.04.2025 holding him to be a "Black Marketeer", as contemplated under the Prevention of Black Marketing and Maintenance of Supplies of Essential Commodities Act, 1980 (Central Act 7 of 1980). 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.



H.C.P(MD)No.478 of 2025

WEB COPY

3. Though several grounds have been raised in the Habeas Corpus Petition, learned counsel for the petitioner focused mainly on the ground that there is an unexplained delay in considering the representation of the petitioner, dated 17.04.2025. According to the learned counsel for the petitioner, though the representation is dated 17.04.2025, the same was received by the Government on 21.04.2025 and the rejection letter was sent to the detenu on 27.05.2025 and the Secretary Law dealt with the same on 26.05.2025. There is a delay of 25 days in Column Nos.6 to 9 and 10 to 12 of the Proforma dated -Nil- in considering the petitioner's representation. The said delay of 25 days in considering the representation remains unexplained and the same vitiates the impugned detention order. In support of his contention, learned counsel for the petitioner relied on the Judgment of the Honourable Supreme Court in *Rajammal vs. State of Tamil Nadu*, reported in (1999) **1 SCC 417**.

4. Learned Additional Public Prosecutor, on instructions, submitted that after satisfying with the materials placed by the Sponsoring



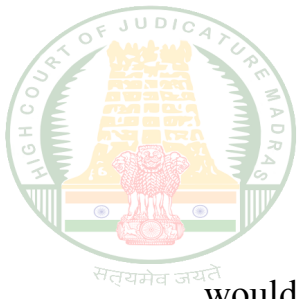
H.C.P(MD)No.478 of 2025

WEB COPY

Authority, the Detaining Authority has passed the impugned detention order and there is no illegality or infirmity in the detention order. It is also stated that even if there is any delay in disposal of the representation, it has not caused any prejudice to the rights of the detenu and hence, prayed for dismissal of the Habeas Corpus Petition.

5. 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 17.04.2025, which was received by the Government on 21.04.2025 and the rejection letter was sent to the detenu on 27.05.2025. As per the proforma submitted by the learned Additional Public Prosecutor, there is a delay of 25 days in Column Nos.6 to 9 and 10 to 12 in considering the representation of the petitioner and we find that the said delay remains unexplained.

6. 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



H.C.P(MD)No.478 of 2025

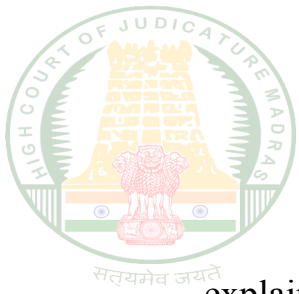
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would render the continued detention impermissible and illegal. From the records produced, we find that no acceptable explanation has been offered for the delay of 25 days. Therefore, we have to hold that the delay has vitiated further detention of the detenu.

7. In the above cited decision of the Honourable Supreme Court in **Rajammal's** case, 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."

8. 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



H.C.P(MD)No.478 of 2025

explained by the authorities concerned. But, in the instant case, the inordinate delay of 25 days has not been properly explained.

9. Further, in a recent decision in ***Ummu Sabeena vs. State of Kerala-2011 STPL (Web) 999 SC***, the Honourable 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 avoidable delay.

10. 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.

11. In the result, the Habeas Corpus Petition is allowed and the Detention Order No.03/2025(CS) dated 03.04.2025, passed by the



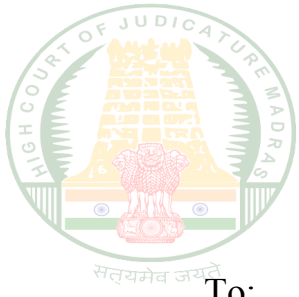
H.C.P(MD)No.478 of 2025

third respondent is set aside. The detenu, viz., Ajmal Khan s/o. Ahamed Kabeer, aged about 45 years, is directed to be released forthwith unless his detention is required in connection with any other case.

[A.D.J.C., J.] [R.P., J.]
07.07.2025

Index : Yes / No
Neutral Citation : Yes / No

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To:

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Madurai District.
- 5.The Additional Public Prosecutor,
Madurai Bench of Madras High Court,
Madurai.



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A.D.JAGADISH CHANDIRA, J.
AND
R.POORNIMA, J.

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ORDER MADE IN
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