

IN THE HIGH COURT OF GUJARAT AT AHMEDABAD

R/SPECIAL CIVIL APPLICATION NO. 16734 of 2023

FOR APPROVAL AND SIGNATURE:

HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE A.Y. KOGJE

Sd/-

and

HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE SAMIR J. DAVE

Sd/-

1	Whether Reporters of Local Papers may be allowed to see the judgment ?	No
2	To be referred to the Reporter or not ?	No
3	Whether their Lordships wish to see the fair copy of the judgment ?	No
4	Whether this case involves a substantial question of law as to the interpretation of the Constitution of India or any order made thereunder ?	No

**MOHMEDAVEJ ALIAS AJJU BAMBAIYA MOHMEDASLAMBHAI SHAIKH
Versus
STATE OF GUJARAT**

Appearance:

MR RAZEEN ZEENA for MR. SOEB R. BHOHARIA(2205) for the Petitioner(s) No. 1
VALIMOHAMMED PATHAN(6383) for the Petitioner(s) No. 1
MR YUVRAJ BRAHMBHATT, AGP for the Respondent(s) No. 1
DS AFF.NOT FILED (R) for the Respondent(s) No. 1,2
GOVERNMENT PLEADER for the Respondent(s) No. 3

**CORAM: HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE A.Y. KOGJE
and
HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE SAMIR J. DAVE**

Date : 16/01/2024

ORAL JUDGMENT (PER : HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE A.Y. KOGJE)

1. This petition under Article 226 of the Constitution of India is filed for following relief:-

"(A) YOUR LORDSHIPS be pleased to issue appropriate writ, order or directions of this

Hon'ble High Court, quashing and setting aside the detention order dated 01/09/2023 at Annexure 'A' to the petition placing the petitioner under preventive detention, in purported exercise of their powers under the Gujarat Prevention of Antisocial Activities Act, 1985, as being illegal, null and void and further be pleased to release the petitioner forthwith;"

2. Thus, essentially, the challenge is to the order of detention dated 01.09.2023 passed by the Police Commissioner, Ahmedabad, respondent No.2 herein, by which the petitioner has been detained as a "dangerous person" based on three offences registered against him, details of which are as under:-

Sr. No.	Name of Police Station	CR No. and date	Sections	Date of bail order
1	Kagdapith Police Station, Ahmedabad	11191025230900 of 2023 dated 14.08.2023	379, 114 of IPC	16.08.2023
2	Kagdapith Police Station, Ahmedabad	11191025230936 of 2023 dated 26.08.2023	379 of IPC	31.08.2023
3	Gaikwad Haveli Police Station, Ahmedabad	11191021230497 of 2023 dated 26.08.2023	379 of IPC	31.08.2023

3. Learned advocate for the detenu submits that the order of detention impugned in this petition deserves to be quashed and set aside on the ground of registration of the offences under the Indian Penal Code by itself cannot bring the case of the detenu within the purview of definition under section 2(c) of the Act. Further, learned advocate for the detenu submits that illegal activity likely to be carried out or alleged to have been carried out, as alleged, cannot have any nexus or bearing with the maintenance of public order and at the most, it can be said to be breach of law

and order. Further, except registration of above FIR/s and Panchnama drawn in pursuance of the investigation, no other relevant and cogent material is on record connecting alleged anti-social activity of the detenu with breach of public order. Learned advocate for the petitioner further submits that it is not possible to hold on the basis of the facts of the present case that activity of the detenu with respect to the criminal cases had affected even tempo of the society causing threat to the very existence of normal and routine life of people at large or that on the basis of criminal cases, the detenu had put the entire social apparatus in disorder, making it difficult for whole system to exist as a system governed by rule of law by disturbing public order.

3.1 It is submitted that the offences are pertaining to theft against individuals and will therefore not amounting to breach of public order as no where in the grounds of detention, it is coming out that the sporadic act of the petitioner has caused disturbance to public order. In any case, option was always available to the detaining authority to resort to cancellation of bail of the petitioner.

3.2 It is submitted that the FIRs were filed against unknown persons and only mobile recovery is there to connect the petitioner with the offences.

4. As against this, learned AGP submitted that the detaining authority had sufficient material on the record to pass the order of detention, particularly reference to the same is made by the detaining authority in the very order of detention where the detaining authority has referred to the fact that it was the petitioner who had himself confessed to commission of theft. Not only that, there are other supporting evidences also which the detaining authority has taken into consideration like drawing of panchnama, which led to discovery of vehicle of which theft was committed. The two FIRs registered against the petitioner are under Chapter-16 and 17 of IPC, thereby attracting the ingredients of "dangerous person".

5. Having heard learned advocates for the parties and considering the facts and circumstances of the case, it appears that the subjective satisfaction arrived at by the detaining authority cannot be said to be legal, valid and in accordance with law, inasmuch as the offences alleged in the FIR/s cannot have any bearing on the public order as required under the Act and other relevant penal laws are sufficient enough to take care of the situation and that the allegations as have been levelled against the detenu cannot be said to be germane for the purpose of bringing the detenu within the meaning of section 2(c) of the Act. Unless and until, the material is there to make out a case that the person

has become a threat and menace to the Society so as to disturb the whole tempo of the society and that all social apparatus is in peril disturbing public order at the instance of such person, it cannot be said that the detenue is a person within the meaning of section 2(c) of the Act. Except general statements, there is no material on record which shows that the detenue is acting in such a manner, which is dangerous to the public order. In this connection, it will be fruitful to refer to a decision of the Supreme Court in **Pushker Mukherjee v/s. State of West Bengal** [AIR 1970 SC 852], where the distinction between 'law and order' and 'public order' has been clearly laid down. The Court observed as follows :

"Does the expression "public order" take in every kind of infraction of order or only some categories thereof ? It is manifest that every act of assault or injury to specific persons does not lead to public disorder. When two people quarrel and fight and assault each other inside a house or in a street, it may be said that there is disorder but not public disorder. Such cases are dealt with under the powers vested in the executive authorities under the provisions of ordinary criminal law but the culprits cannot be detained on the ground that they were disturbing public order. The contravention of any law always affects order but before it can be said to affect public order, it must affect the community or the public at large. In this connection we must draw a line of demarcation between serious and aggravated forms of disorder which directly affect the community or injure the public interest and the relatively minor breaches of peace of a purely local significance which primarily injure specific individuals and only in a secondary sense public interest. A mere disturbance of law and order leading to disorder is thus not necessarily sufficient for action under the Preventive Detention Act but a disturbance which will affect public order comes within the scope of

the Act."

6. As is held in the preceding paras, the offence in which the petitioner is involved, is of theft against private individuals and the petitioner has been enlarged on bail and therefore, ordinary law is sufficient to prevent the petitioner from indulging in further offence, particularly when the petitioner has been granted bail in connection with both the offences on which the detaining authority has relied upon to arrive at a subjective satisfaction. At the same time, the detaining authority has not taken into consideration resorting to the procedure for cancellation of bail.

7. In the decision of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in the case of ***Shaik Nazeen v/s. State of Telanga and Ors*** rendered in Criminal Appeal No.908 of 2022 (@ SLP (Crl.) No.4260 of 2022 dated 22.06.2022, the Hon'ble Supreme Court has made following observations in para 17:-

"17. In any case, the State is not without a remedy, as in case the detenu is much a menace to the society as is being alleged, then the prosecution should seek for the cancellation of his bail and/or move an appeal to the Higher Court. But definitely seeking shelter under the preventive detention law is not the proper remedy under the facts and circumstances of the case."

8. No need to say when a citizen is deprived of his personal liberty by keeping him behind the bar under the provisions of the PASA law without trial by the competent court,

the detaining authority is required under the law to justify its action and in absence of reply/counter affidavit, the averments made in the petition remain unchallenged and uncontroverted.

9. In view of above, we are inclined to allow this petition, because simplicitor registration of FIR/s by itself cannot have any nexus with the breach of maintenance of public order and the authority cannot have recourse under the Act and no other relevant and cogent material exists for invoking power under section 3(2) of the Act.

10. In the result, the present petition is hereby allowed and the impugned order of detention dated 01.09.2023 passed by the respondent-detaining authority is hereby quashed and set aside. The detenu is ordered to be set at liberty forthwith if not required in any other case. Rule is made absolute accordingly.

Direct service is permitted.

Sd/-
(A.Y. KOGJE, J)

Sd/-
(SAMIR J. DAVE,J)

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