

IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB & HARYANA AT
CHANDIGARH

CRM-M-47065-2021

Date of decision : 17.11.2021

Balvir Singh @ Bittu

... Petitioner

Versus

State of Punjab

... Respondent

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE VIKAS BAHL

Present: Mr.Subhash Kumar, Advocate
for the petitioner.

Mr.Karanbir Singh, AAG, Punjab.

VIKAS BAHL, J.(ORAL)

This is the first petition under Section 439 Cr.P.C. praying for granting the concession of regular bail to the petitioner in FIR no.128 dated 25.06.2020 registered under Sections 15 and 29 of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985, at Police Station Bilga, District Jalandhar.

Learned counsel for the petitioner has submitted that in the present case, the petitioner was not named in the FIR and no recovery has been effected from the petitioner. The recovery of 52 kgs. of poppy husk, which was marginally more than 50 kgs. (as per the table, 50 kgs. or more is specified to be commercial quantity under the Act), was recovered from co-accused Jagjit Singh @ Major Singh. It is further argued that the petitioner has been implicated in the present case solely on the basis of disclosure statement of co-accused Jagjit Singh @ Major Singh. It is further submitted

that there is no other evidence to connect the present petitioner with the alleged occurrence except the said disclosure statement. It is also submitted that a co-ordinate Bench of this Court vide order dated 03.12.2020 passed in CRM-M-31625-2020 titled as “Jagjit Singh @ Major vs. State of Punjab” (Annexure P-9) has granted regular bail to Jagjit Singh @ Major Singh, co-accused, from whom the recovery was effected and Mangal Singh @ Manga whose name has also appeared in the disclosure statement, has been granted anticipatory bail vide order dated 14.09.2021 passed in CRM-M-9106-2021 titled as “Mangal Singh @ Manga vs. State of Punjab”.

Learned counsel for the petitioner has relied upon an order passed by Coordinate Bench of this Court dated 17.06.2020 in CRM-M-12051-2020 titled “**Mewa Singh Vs. State of Punjab**”, in which in a case of recovery of 1.7 Kgs of 'Heroin', a similar disclosure statement was made against the petitioner therein to the effect that he had supplied the contraband and in the said situation the petitioner therein was granted anticipatory bail. The relevant portion of the said order is reproduced hereinbelow:-

- “1. The petitioner has approached this Court seeking grant of anticipatory bail in a case registered against him vide FIR No.133 dated 24.11.2019 under Section 21 NDPS Act Police Station Lohian, District Jalandhar.*
- 2. Reply way of affidavit of Mr. Piara Singh, PPS, Deputy Superintendent of Police, Sub-Division Shahkot, District Jalandhar (Rural) on behalf of the respondent-State has been filed, which is taken on record.*
- 3. The allegations in nut-shell are that Bachittar Singh was found in possession of 1.7 Kgs. 'Heroin'. During the course of interrogation, he made a disclosure statement nominating the petitioner as an accused wherein he*

stated that the contraband in question had been supplied by the petitioner.

4. Learned counsel for the petitioner has submitted that he has falsely been implicated in the present case and was never arrested at the spot and that the alleged disclosure statement is not worth credence.

5. Opposing the petition, learned State counsel has submitted that keeping in view the antecedents of the petitioner his complicity is clearly evident inasmuch as he stands involved in three other cases i.e. FIR No.43 dated 2.4.2016 under Sections 15, 21, 22 NDPS Act, Police Station Sultanpur Lodhi; FIR No.5 dated 5.1.2020 under Sections 307, 186, 332, 353, 224, 225, 427, 148, 149 IPC, Police Station Sultanpur Lodhi & FIR No.193 dated 193 dated 22.11.2019 under Sections 15, 21, 25, 29 NDPS Act, Police Station Kartarpur.

6. I have considered rival submissions addressed before this Court.

7. It is not disputed that the petitioner was never apprehended at the spot and that the only evidence against him is in the shape of disclosure statement, the admissibility and veracity of which would be tested during the course of trial. As regards the other three cases which are stated to be pending against the petitioner, the learned counsel for the petitioner has submitted that even in the said cases he has been falsely implicated and was never arrested at the spot and has been granted anticipatory bail in all three cases.

8. Having regard to the facts and circumstances of the case and that it is a case where the petitioner has been nominated solely on the basis of disclosure statement, the petition is accepted and it is ordered that the petitioner in the event of his arrest shall be released on bail subject to his furnishing personal bonds and surety bonds to the satisfaction of Arresting/Investigating

Officer. However, the petitioner shall join the investigation as and when called upon to do so and cooperate with the Arresting/Investigating Officer and shall also abide by the conditions as provided under Section 438 (2) Cr.P.C.

9. It is however clarified that in case the petitioner does not join investigation, it shall be open to the investigating agency/prosecution to move for cancellation of his bail.”

Learned counsel for the petitioner has also relied upon order of another co-ordinate Bench dated 16.07.2021 passed in **CRM-M-12997-2020** titled as “***Daljit Singh Vs. State of Haryana***”. The relevant portion of the said order is reproduced hereinbelow:-

“Petitioner seeks grant of anticipatory bail under Section 438 Cr.P.C. in case bearing FIR No.188 dated 08.04.2020 registered under Sections 15, 18, 27A, 29 of NDPS Act, under Sections 140, 188, 216, 419, 420, 467, 468, 471, 474 IPC and under Section 6 of Official Secret Act at Police Station Pehowa, District Kurukshetra.

Petitioner has been implicated on the basis of disclosure statement of co-accused from whom 248 kgs of poppy husk, 1 Kg 500 grams of opium and 199 Kgs khas khas were recovered.

FIR was registered on the basis of secret information, but still name of petitioner did not figure in the ruqa of the police.

Notice of motion was issued on 27.05.2020 alongwith interim directions in favour of the petitioner to join the investigation.

Order dated 27.05.2020 is reproduced here as under:-

“On account of outbreak of covid-19 the instant matter is being taken up through video

conferencing.

Instant petition has been filed under Section 438 Cr.PC for grant of anticipatory bail to the petitioner in FIR No.188 dated 8.4.2020 for the offences under Section 15,18,27-A,29 of NDPS Act, 1985 at Police Station Pehowa, District Kurukshetra.

Learned counsel for the petitioner has inter alia contended that the petitioner is innocent and has been falsely implicated in the case only on the basis of disclosure statement of co-accused from whom recovery of 248 kgs of poppy husk, 1 kg 500 grams of opium and 199 kgs.of khas khas was recovered. It has been further contended that the factum of his false implication is further fortified from the fact that the recovery of the aforementioned narcotic contraband was effected on the basis of secret information and his name did not figure either in the ruka sent by the police nor in the FIR in question coupled with the fact that nothing was recovered from him. He is not even involved in any other case of similar nature.

Notice of motion for 10.7.2020.

On the asking of the Court, Mr. Saurabh Mohunta, DAG., Haryana accepts notice.

Meanwhile, petitioner is directed to join the investigation and appear before the investigating agency/Investigating Officer. On his appearance, he shall be released on interim bail to the satisfaction of arresting/investigating officer. The petitioner shall, join the investigation as and when call for and shall abide by the conditions specified under Section 438(2) Cr.P.C.

27.05.2020.

Thereafter, the case was adjourned for

filing detailed reply on behalf of the State.

The stands of the State is that the petitioner was escorting the canter in which the contraband was present and he was assigned the duty of giving signal in case of presence of police on the way.

Learned State counsel relies upon call details, tower location of the petitioner and the co-accused and also relies upon bank statement showing deposit of amount in the account of co-accused. The material on which the learned State counsel relies upon is dependent upon the evidence to be led in that context at the relevant stage.

Petitioner has joined the investigation, but learned State counsel seeks custody of the petitioner on the aforesaid premise.

*Having heard learned counsel for the parties, I find that the petitioner having involved on the basis of disclosure statement of co-accused namely Balbir and Rajinder is hit by the ratio of **Tofan Singh vs State of Tamil Nadu, Criminal Appeal No.152 of 2013** wherein it has been observed that the officers who are invested with powers under Section 53 of NDPS Act are the police officers within the meaning of Section 25 of the Evidence Act. Any confessional statement made before the police officer would be hit by Section 25 of the Evidence Act. Statement under Section 67 of NDPS Act cannot be used as a confessional statement in the trial of an offence under NDPS Act.*

In view of aforesaid position, it would be just and appropriate to confirm order dated 27.05.2020, without meaning anything on the

merits of the case.

Ordered accordingly.

However, the petitioner shall keep on joining the investigation as and when required to do so by the Investigating Officer and shall abide by the conditions as envisaged under Section 438 (2) Cr.P.C. Petition stands disposed of.”

Learned counsel for the petitioner has further submitted that in the present case, the petitioner has been in custody since 04.10.2021 and the challan has already been presented in the case and there are as many as 13 prosecution witnesses, out of them, none have been examined and, thus, the trial is likely to take time, more so, in view of the present pandemic.

Learned State counsel has, however, opposed the present petition for bail and has submitted that the petitioner is involved in other cases.

Learned counsel for the petitioner in rebuttal has submitted that in one of the cases, the petitioner has been acquitted and in the other cases which are pending, the petitioner has been granted the concession of bail. He has relied upon the judgment of Hon'ble Supreme Court in “**Maulana Mohd. Amir Rashadi vs. State of U.P. and another**”, 2012 (2) SCC 382 to contend that the facts and circumstances of the present case are to be seen while deciding a bail application and the bail application of the petitioner cannot be rejected solely on the ground that the petitioner is involved in other cases. The relevant portion of the said judgment is reproduced hereinbelow:-

“As observed by the High Court, merely on the basis of criminal antecedents, the claim of the second respondent cannot be rejected. In other words, it is the duty of the Court to find out the role of the accused in

the case in which he has been charged and other circumstances such as possibility of fleeing away from the jurisdiction of the Court etc.”

Keeping in view the above said facts and circumstances, more so, the fact that the petitioner was not named in the FIR and no recovery has been effected from the petitioner and also the fact that the petitioner has been made an accused only on the basis of disclosure statement made by co-accused Jagjit Singh @ Major, and there is no incriminating evidence against the petitioner and the said Jagjit Singh @ Major has been granted regular bail by a co-ordinate Bench of this Court and even Mangal Singh @ Manga, who was also named on the basis of disclosure statement, has been granted the concession of anticipatory bail by this Court and also in view of the law laid down in the judgments referred to by the learned counsel for the petitioner, and also the fact that the petitioner has been in custody since 04.10.2021 and there are as many as 13 prosecution witnesses and none of which have been examined till date and thus, the trial is likely to take time, more so, in view of the present pandemic, the petition is allowed and the petitioner is ordered to be released on bail on his furnishing bail / surety bonds to the satisfaction of the concerned trial Court/ Duty Magistrate and subject to him not being required in any other case.

However, nothing stated above shall be construed as a final expression of opinion on the merits of the case and the trial would proceed independently of the observations made in the present case which are only for the purpose of adjudicating the present bail petition.

(VIKAS BAHL)
JUDGE

November 17, 2021

Davinder Kumar

Whether speaking / reasoned
Whether reportable

Yes/No
Yes/No