



BEFORE THE MADURAI BENCH OF MADRAS HIGH COURT
(Criminal Jurisdiction)
Reserved on : 22.03.2022
Delivered on : 29.03.2022
PRESENT

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The Hon`ble Mr.Justice K.MURALI SHANKAR
CRL OP(MD). No.3848 of 2022

Hemalatha ... Petitioner/Accused No.2

vs.

The Inspector of Police,
Kenikarai Police Station,
Ramanathapuram District. ... Respondent/Complainant
Crime No.772 of 2021.

For Petitioner : Mr.V.M.Jegadeesha Pandian
Advocate.

For Respondent : Mr.E.Antony Sahaya Prabahar,
Additional Public Prosecutor

PETITION FOR BAIL Under Section 439 of Cr.P.C.

PRAYER :-

For Bail in Crime No.772 of 2022 on the file of the respondent Police

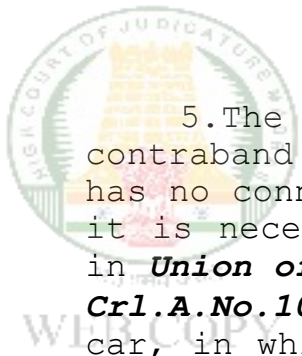
ORDER : The Court made the following order :-

The petitioner/Accused, who was arrested and remanded to judicial custody on 14.10.2021 for the offences punishable under Sections 8(c) r/w 20(b)(ii)(C) of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985, in Crime No.772 of 2021, on the file of the respondent police, seeks bail.

2.The case of the prosecution is that on 14.10.2021, on receipt of secret information, the respondent Police have made a vehicle check up at Ramanathapuram Mandabam Highway Road at Pattanamkathan, Vallabai Nagar, ECR Road at about 06.45 pm, one four wheeler Hundai Car bearing Registration No.TN 04 P 6118, was intercepted and on the vehicle check up, the respondent Police had seized 23 kgs of Ganja from the accused persons and on that basis, FIR came to be registered in Crime No.772 of 2021.

3.The petitioner's case is that she has not committed any offence as alleged by the prosecution, that she has noway connected with the alleged occurrence, that the respondent Police without any materials has falsely implicated the petitioner in the above case and that the petitioner has no knowledge about the other accused persons.

4.The learned Additional Public Prosecutor appearing for the State would submit that the accused including the petitioner were travelling in the Hundai Car, that the said Car was intercepted by the respondent Police and they had recovered 23 kgs of contraband, which is commercial quantity from the Car.



5.The learned counsel for the petitioner would submit that no contraband was recovered from the petitioner and that the petitioner has no connection whatever with the other accused. At this juncture, it is necessary to refer the judgment of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in ***Union of India through Narcotics Control Bureau vs. Nawaz Khan*** in ***Crl.A.No.1043 of 2021*** dated 22.09.2021. In the said decision case, a car, in which, the respondent therein was travelling with the other two accused was intercepted and they have recovered two polythene packets hidden under the place where the wiper is connected to the front bonnet of the car and that since the respondent therein has claimed that there was no recovery from him, the High Court has granted bail holding that the twin conditions under Section 37 of NDPS Act get satisfied. When the same was challenged before the Hon'ble Supreme Court, the Hon'ble Supreme Court has observed as follows:-

"21.In the present case, the High Court while granting bail to the respondent adverted to two circumstances, namely (i) absence of recovery of the contraband from the possession of the respondent and (ii) the wrong name in the endorsement of translation of the statement under Section 67 of the NDPS Act.

22.We shall deal with each of these circumstances in turn. The respondent has been accused of an offence under Section 8 of the NDPS Act, which is punishable under Sections 21, 27A, 29, 60(3) of the said Act. Section 8 of the Act prohibits a person from possessing any narcotic drug or psychotropic substance. The concept of possession recurs in Sections 20 to 22, which provide for punishment for offences under the Act. In ***Madan Lal and Another v. State of Himachal Pradesh***¹⁶ this Court held that

"19.Whether there was conscious possession has to be determined with reference to the factual backdrop. The facts which can be culled out from the evidence on record are that all the accused persons were travelling in a vehicle and as noted by the trial court they were known to each other and it has not been explained or shown as to how they travelled together from the same destination in a vehicle which was not a public vehicle.

20.Section 20(b) makes possession of contraband articles an offence. Section 20 appears in Chapter IV of the Act which relates to offences for possession of such articles. It is submitted that in order to make the possession illicit, there must be a conscious possession.



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21.It is highlighted that unless the possession was coupled with the requisite mental element i.e. conscious possession and not mere custody without awareness of the nature of such possession, Section 20 is not attracted.

22.The expression "possession" is a polymorphous term which assumes different colours in different contexts. It may carry different meanings in contextually different backgrounds. It is impossible, as was observed in Supdt. & Remembrancer of Legal (2003) 7 SCC 465 Affairs, W.B. v. Anil Kumar Bhunja [(1979) 4 SCC 274 : 1979 SCC (Cri) 1038 : AIR 1980 SC 52] to work out a completely logical and precise definition of "possession" uniform[ly] applicable to all situations in the context of all statutes.

23.The word "conscious" means awareness about a particular fact. It is a state of mind which is deliberate or intended.

[...]

26. Once possession is established, the person who claims that it was not a conscious possession has to establish it, because how he came to be in possession is within his special knowledge. Section 35 of the Act gives a statutory recognition of this position because of the presumption available in law. Similar is the position in terms of Section 54 where also presumption is available to be drawn from possession of illicit articles."

What amounts to "conscious possession" was also considered in **Dharampal Singh v. State of Punjab**¹⁷, where it was held that the knowledge of possession of contraband has to be gleaned from the facts and circumstances of a case. The standard of conscious possession would be different in case of a public transport vehicle with several persons as opposed to a private vehicle with a few persons known to one another. In **Mohan Lal v. State of Rajasthan**¹⁸, this Court also observed that the term "possession" could mean physical possession with animus; custody over the prohibited substances with animus; exercise of dominion and control as a result of concealment; or personal knowledge as to the existence of the contraband and the intention based on this knowledge.



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23. We have referred to the above precedents to reiterate the governing principles. At this stage of the proceedings, it needs only to be clarified that the trial is to take place in this Court where evidence will be adduced.

24. As regards the finding of the High Court regarding absence of recovery of the contraband from the possession of the respondent, we note that in **Union of India v. Rattan Malik**¹⁹, a two-judge Bench of this Court cancelled the bail of an accused and reversed the finding of the High Court, which had held that as the contraband (heroin) was recovered from a specially made cavity above the cabin of a truck, no contraband was found in the 'possession' of the accused. The Court observed that merely making a finding on the possession of the contraband did not fulfil the parameters of Section 37(1)(b) and there was non-application of mind by the High Court."

6. The above decision is squarely applicable to the case on hand. In the present case also, the contraband was recovered from the Car, in which, the petitioner was also travelling at the time of recovery.

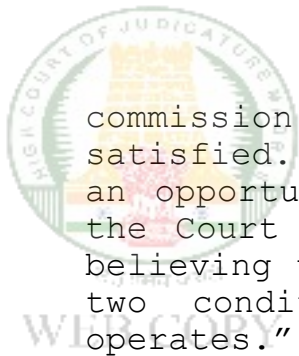
7. The learned Additional Public Prosecutor would submit that the petitioner is having one previous case under the NDPS act.

8. This Court, in batch of cases in **Crl.O.P. (MD) No.5093 of 2021 etc.**, in **Muruganandham and another vs. the State represented by the Inspector of Police, Authoor Police Station, Thoothukudi District and others**, dated 23.12.2021, has observed as follows:-

"18. Section 37 of the NDPS Act creates bar for grant of bail whenever the recovery is of commercial in nature and also when the offence is under Section 27-A of the NDPS Act.

Perusal of the provisions of Section 37 of NDPS Act would show that although there is a bar created for grant of bail but a departure can be made in case where the Court is satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for believing that he is not guilty of such an offence and that he is not likely to commit any offence while on bail, then the Court can always consider the grant of bail in that regard. The Hon'ble Supreme Court in the case of **State of Kerala and another vs. Rajesh and another**, reported in **2020 SCC Online SC 81**, has observed;

"20. The scheme of Section 37 reveals that the exercise of power to grant bail is not only subject to the limitations contained under Section 439 of the CrPC, but is also subject to the limitation placed by Section 37 which commences with nonobstante clause. The operative part of the said section is in the negative form prescribing the enlargement of bail to any person accused of



commission of an offence under the Act, unless twin conditions are satisfied. The first condition is that the prosecution must be given an opportunity to oppose the application; and the second, is that the Court must be satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for believing that he is not guilty of such offence. If either of these two conditions is not satisfied, the ban for granting bail operates."

9. In the case on hand, since the contraband was recovered from the Car in which the petitioner was travelling and that the petitioner is having one previous case under the NDPS act, this Court has no hesitation to hold that the petitioner has failed to satisfy the twin conditions contemplated under Section 37 of NDPS Act. Consequently, this Court has no other go, but to reject the petitioner's bail plea.

10. In the result, this Criminal Original Petition is dismissed.
sd/-

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Sub-Assistant Registrar (C.S.)
Madurai Bench of Madras High Court,
Madurai - 625 023.

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Note : In view of the present lock down owing to COVID-19 pandemic, a web copy of the order may be utilized for official purposes, but, ensuring that the copy of the order that is presented is the correct copy, shall be the responsibility of the advocate/litigant concerned.

TO

- 1 THE INSPECTOR OF POLICE
KENIKARAI POLICE STATION, RAMANATHAPURAM DISTRICT.
- 2 THE SUPERINTENDENT,
CENTRAL PRISON FOR WOMEN, MADURAI.
- 3 THE ADDITIONAL PUBLIC PROSECUTOR,
MADURAI BENCH OF MADRAS HIGH COURT, MADURAI.

ORDER
IN
CRL OP(MD) No.3848 of 2022
Date : 29/03/2022

SS/JM/SAR:IV/01.04.2022 : 5P/4C