

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA  
AT CHANDIGARH**

CRM-M-45586-2021

Date of Decision: January 07, 2022

Angrej Singh

...Petitioner

Versus

## State of Punjab

...Respondent

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE ANOOP CHITKARA

Present: Mr. Ravi Malhotra, Advocate for the petitioner.

Mr. Sidakmeet Singh Sandhu, AAG, Punjab

\* \* \* \*

ANOOP CHITKARA, J.

|         |            |                             |                        |
|---------|------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| FIR No. | Dated      | Police Station              | Sections               |
| 170     | 26.08.2021 | Tibba, District<br>Ludhiana | 21-B of NDPS Act, 1985 |

1. The petitioner apprehending arrest for violating the above-mentioned provisions of Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985 (NDPS Act) per the FIR captioned above has come up before this Court under Section 438 CrPC seeking anticipatory bail.

2. The petitioner has following criminal history:

| Sr. No. | FIR No. | Dated      | Offences             | Police Station      |
|---------|---------|------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| 1       | 70      | 14.04.2021 | 21-61-85 of NDPS Act | Divn No.2, Ludhiana |
| 2       | 285     | 2021       | 21-61-85 of NDPS Act | GRP, Ludhiana       |

2.(a) Vide order dated 01.11.2021, this Court had granted interim anticipatory bail to the petitioner.

3.     Ld. Counsel for the petitioner contends that the petitioner has been arraigned on the disclosure statement of the co-accused. He further contends that the custodial investigation would serve no purpose whatsoever, and the pre-trial incarceration would cause an irreversible injustice to the petitioner and family. Furthermore, he has joined the investigation.

4. The contention on behalf of the State is that the petitioner has criminal antecedents and two more cases of similar nature are pending against the petitioner, which involved 100 grams of heroin. He further contends that if the petitioner is released on bail, would again indulge in the drug trade. Ld. Counsel appearing for State opposes the bail and submits that grant of bail encourages the drug peddlers and the

drug menace is spreading day by day.

REASONING:

5. The quantity allegedly involved is 50 grams of heroin, which is less than commercial quantity. Given this, the rigours of S. 37 of the NDPS Act do not apply in the present case. Since in the present case, the petitioner has criminal history but he was named only on the statement of co-accused.

6. Section 2 (vii-a) of the NDPS Act defines commercial quantity as the quantity greater than the quantity specified in the schedule. Section 2 (xxiii-a) defines small quantity as a quantity less than the quantity specified in the table of the NDPS Act. The remaining quantity falls in an undefined category, generally called an intermediate quantity. All Sections in the NDPS Act, which specify an offence, also mention the minimum and maximum sentence, depending upon the quantity of the substance. The commercial quantity mandates a minimum sentence of ten years of imprisonment and a minimum fine of Rupees One hundred thousand, and bail is subject to the riders mandated in S. 37 of NDPS Act. When the quantity is less than commercial, the restrictions of Section 37 of the NDPS Act will not attract, and the factors for bail become similar to the offence regular statutes.

7. In *Sami Ullaha v Superintendent Narcotic Control Bureau*, (2008) 16 SCC 471, the Hon'ble Supreme Court holds that in intermediate quantity, the rigors of the provisions of Section 37 may not be justified.

8. In *Gurbaksh Singh Sibbia v State of Punjab*, 1980 (2) SCC 565, (Para 30), a Constitutional Bench of Supreme Court held that the bail decision must enter the cumulative effect of the variety of circumstances justifying the grant or refusal of bail. In *Kalyan Chandra Sarkar v Rajesh Ranjan @ Pappu Yadav*, 2005 (2) SCC 42, (Para 18) a three-member Bench of Supreme Court held that the persons accused of non-bailable offences are entitled to bail if the Court concerned concludes that the prosecution has failed to establish a prima facie case against him, or despite the existence of a prima facie case, the Court records reasons for its satisfaction for the need to release such person on bail, in the given fact situations. The rejection of bail does not preclude filing a subsequent application. The courts can release on bail, provided the circumstances then prevailing requires, and a change in the fact situation. In *State of Rajasthan v Balchand*, AIR 1977 SC 2447, (Para 2 & 3), Supreme Court noticeably illustrated that the basic rule might perhaps be tersely put as bail, not jail, except where there are circumstances suggestive of fleeing from justice or thwarting the course of justice or creating other troubles in the shape of repeating offences or intimidating witnesses and the like by the petitioner who seeks enlargement on bail from the Court. It is true that

the gravity of the offence involved is likely to induce the petitioner to avoid the course of justice and must weigh when considering the question of bail. So also, the heinousness of the crime. In Gudikanti Narasimhulu v Public Prosecutor, (1978) 1 SCC 240, (Para 16), Supreme Court held that the delicate light of the law favors release unless countered by the negative criteria necessitating that course. In Prahlad Singh Bhati v NCT, Delhi, (2001) 4 SCC 280, Supreme Court highlighted one of the factors for bail to be the public or the State's immense interest and similar other considerations. In Dataram Singh v State of Uttar Pradesh, (2018) 3 SCC 22, (Para 6), Supreme Court held that the grant or refusal of bail is entirely within the discretion of the judge hearing the matter and though that discretion is unfettered, it must be exercised judiciously, compassionately, and in a humane manner. Also, conditions for the grant of bail ought not to be so strict as to be incapable of compliance, thereby making the grant of bail illusory.

9. The possibility of the accused influencing the investigation, tampering with evidence, intimidating witnesses, and the likelihood of fleeing justice, can be taken care of by imposing elaborative and stringent conditions. In Sushila Aggarwal, (2020) 5 SCC 1, Para 92, the Constitutional Bench of Hon'ble Supreme Court held that unusually, subject to the evidence produced, the Courts can impose restrictive conditions. In Sumit Mehta v. State of N.C.T. of Delhi, (2013) 15 SCC 570, Para 11, Hon'ble Supreme Court holds that while exercising power Under Section 438 of the Code, the Court is duty-bound to strike a balance between the individual's right to personal freedom and the right of investigation of the police. While exercising utmost restraint, the Court can impose conditions countenancing its object as permissible under the law to ensure an uninterrupted and unhampered investigation.

10. While considering each bail petition of the accused with a criminal history, it throws an onerous responsibility upon the Courts to act judiciously with reasonableness because arbitrariness is the antithesis of law. The criminal history must be of cases where the accused was convicted, including the suspended sentences and all pending First Information Reports, wherein the bail petitioner stands arraigned as an accused. In reckoning the number of cases as criminal history, the prosecutions resulting in acquittal or discharge, or when Courts quashed the FIR; the prosecution stands withdrawn, or prosecution filed a closure report; cannot be included. Although crime is to be despised and not the criminal, yet for a recidivist, the contours of a playing field are marshy, and graver the criminal history, slushier the puddles.

11. Given above, the previous criminal history of the petitioner is not being considered at this stage. Suffice it to be say that in the present case, quantity of 50 grams as even if all the quantities are clubbed still it would maximum be 250 grams,

which is less than commercial quantity. As per the Schedule table of the NDPS, 250 grams falls in non-commercial quantity.

12. On a perusal of FIR, the Prosecution prima facie fails to point towards the exceptional circumstances, negating the bail. Without commenting on the case's merits, in the facts and circumstances peculiar to this case, and for the reasons mentioned above, the petitioner makes a case for bail, subject to the following terms and conditions, which shall be over and above and irrespective of the contents of the form of bail bonds in chapter XXXIII of CrPC, 1973.

13. In the event of arrest, the petitioner shall be released on bail in the FIR mentioned above, subject to furnishing a personal bond of Rs. Ten thousand (INR 10,000/-), with one surety of Rs. Twenty-five thousand (INR 25,000/-), to the satisfaction of the Investigator. Before accepting the surety, the attesting officer must satisfy that if the accused fails to appear in Court, then such surety is capable of producing the accused before the Court, keeping in mind the jurisprudence behind the sureties, which is to secure the presence of the accused.

14. On the reverse page of personal bonds, the attesting officer shall mention the permanent address of the petitioner along with the phone number linked with the AADHAR card, the other phone numbers (if any), and e-mail (if any). In case of any change in the above particulars, the petitioner shall immediately and not later than 30 days from such modification, intimate about the change to the concerned Police Station and the concerned Court.

15. The petitioner to also execute a bond for attendance in the concerned Court(s), as and when asked to do so. The presentation of the personal bond shall be deemed acceptance of the following and all other stipulations, terms, and conditions of this bail order.

16. If the petitioner repeats the offence and is involved in any other FIR under NDPS even for the small quantity, then while considering the bail, the concerned Court shall keep in mind that this Court had granted bail to the petitioner only on the premise that quantity of the previous cases, if clubbed together would make 250 grams, which is non-commercial. Thus, any further quantity would make the total upto commercial quantity. The concerned Court also consider that this Court had given the final chance to the petitioner to reform himself and course correct and despite that he repeatedly indulge in drugs.

17. The petitioner shall not influence, browbeat, pressurize, make any inducement, threat, or promise, directly or indirectly, to the witnesses, the Police officials, or any

other person acquainted with the facts and the circumstances of the case, to dissuade them from disclosing such facts to the Police, or the Court, or to tamper with the evidence.

18. Within ten days of release from prison, the petitioner shall procure a smartphone and inform its IMEI number and other details to the SHO/I.O. of the Police station mentioned before. The petitioner shall always keep the phone with him and location/GPS with the "ON" mode. Whenever the Investigating officer asks to share the location, the petitioner shall immediately do so. The petitioner shall neither clear the location history, WhatsApp chats, calls nor format the phone without permission of the concerned SHO/I.O.

19. Given the nature of allegations and the other circumstances peculiar to this case, the petitioner shall surrender all weapons, firearms, ammunition, if any, along with the arms license to the concerned authority within 30 days from today and inform the Investigator about the compliance. However, subject to the Indian Arms Act, 1959, the petitioner shall be entitled to renew and take it back in case of acquittal in this case.

20. Within 30 days from today, the petitioner shall mention details of all assets, held either individually or jointly, including bank balances, fixed deposits, DEMAT Accounts, to the Investigator.

21. During the trial's pendency, if the petitioner repeats or commits any offence where the sentence prescribed is more than seven years or violates any condition as stipulated in this order, it shall always be permissible to the respondent to apply for cancellation of this bail. It shall further be open for any investigating agency to bring it to the notice of the Court seized of the subsequent application that the accused was earlier cautioned not to indulge in criminal activities. Otherwise, the bail bonds shall continue to remain in force throughout the trial and after that in terms of Section 437-A of the Cr.P.C.

22. Any Advocate for the petitioner and the Officer in whose presence the petitioner puts signatures on personal bonds shall explain all conditions of this bail order in any language that the petitioner understands.

23. In case the petitioner finds the bail condition(s) as violating fundamental, human, or other rights, or causing difficulty due to any situation, then for modification of such term(s), the petitioner may file a reasoned application before this Court, and after taking cognizance, even to the Court taking cognizance or the trial Court, as the case may be, and such Court shall also be competent to modify or delete any condition.

24. This order does not, in any manner, limit or restrict the rights of the Police or the investigating agency from further investigation as per law.

25. In case the Investigator/Officer-In-Charge of the concerned Police Station arraigns another section of any penal offence in this FIR, and if the new section prescribes maximum sentence which is not greater than the sections mentioned above, then this bail order shall be deemed to have also been passed for the newly added section(s). However, suppose the newly inserted sections prescribe a sentence exceeding the maximum sentence prescribed in the sections mentioned above, then in that case, the Investigator/Officer-In-Charge shall give the petitioner notice of a minimum of seven days, providing an opportunity to avail the remedies available in law.

26. Any observation made hereinabove is neither an expression of opinion on the merits of the case, nor shall the trial Court advert to these comments.

27. In return for the protection from incarceration, the Court believes that the accused shall also reciprocate through desirable behavior.

28. This interim bail is subject to the petitioner joining investigation and fully cooperating with the investigating agencies. Failure to do so shall ipso facto result in its withdrawal.

29. *There would be no need for a certified copy of this order for furnishing bonds, and any Advocate for the Petitioner can download this order along with case status from the official web page of this Court and attest it to be a true copy. In case the attesting officer wants to verify the authenticity, such an officer can also verify its authenticity and may download and use the downloaded copy for attesting bonds.*

In view of above, order dated 01.11.2021 made absolute and petition stands allowed.

(ANOOP CHITKARA)  
JUDGE

07.01.2022  
sonia arora

Whether speaking/reasoned: Yes

Whether reportable: No