

IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA AT
CHANDIGARH

(208)

CRM-M-52482-2021 (O&M)

Date of decision: - 14.02.2022

Davinder Singh

....Petitioner

Versus

State of Punjab

.....Respondent

CORAM : HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE VIKAS BAHL

Present:- Mr. Vipul Jindal, Advocate,
for the applicant-petitioner.

Mr. Sarabjit S. Cheema, AAG, Punjab.

(Through Video Conferencing)

VIKAS BAHL, J. (ORAL)

CRM-1849-2022

Present application has been filed for placing on record additional documents as Annexures P-11 to P-15.

Application is allowed, as prayed for. Additional documents (Annexures P-11 to P-15) are taken on record, subject to all just exceptions.

CRM-M-52482-2021

This is the first petition under Section 439 of Cr.P.C. for grant of regular bail in FIR No.120 dated 08.07.2021, under Sections

21/29 of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985, at Police Station Nakodar, District Jalandhar.

Learned counsel for the petitioner has submitted that the petitioner was not named in the FIR and no recovery has been effected from him and the recovery of 350 grams and 150 grams of Heroin was effected from co-accused Gurmeet Singh and Baljinder Singh, respectively. It is only on the basis of the disclosure statement of the said co-accused, that the present petitioner has been implicated in the present case. It is further submitted that there is nothing in the challan to connect the present petitioner with the alleged recovery. It is also submitted that as per the challan, there are no call details linking the petitioner and co-accused from whom the recovery has been made. It is stated that the petitioner has been in custody since 14.10.2021 and the challan has already been filed and there are 13 prosecution witnesses, none of whom have been examined and the trial is likely to take time to conclude, moreso, in view of the present pandemic and thus, the petitioner deserves the concession of regular bail. It is further submitted that all the witnesses are police officials and thus, the question of influencing them does not arise.

Learned State counsel, on the other hand, has opposed the present petition for regular bail and has submitted that the petitioner is involved in one other case of NDPS Act.

Learned counsel for the petitioner in rebuttal has submitted that the said FIR No.80 dated 30.07.2017, registered under Section 21 of the NDPS Act, in which, the allegation was that the petitioner was in

conscious possession of 20 grams of Heroin, which is far less than the stipulated commercial quantity of 250 grams and in the said case, the petitioner was sentenced to undergo imprisonment for the period already undergone by him and to pay a fine of Rs.500/-, by the Additional Sessions Judge, Tarn Tarna, vide judgment dated 29.10.2019 (P-10).

Learned counsel for the petitioner has relied upon the judgment passed in ***CRM-M-12051-2020***, by a Co-ordinate Bench of this Court dated 17.06.2020 titled as “***Mewa Singh Vs. State of Punjab***”; the judgment passed in ***CRM-M-12997-2020 titled as “Daljit Singh Vs. State of Haryana”*** and judgment of Hon'ble Supreme Court in “***Maulana Mohd. Amir Rashadi Vs. State of U.P. and another***”, reported as 2012 (2) SCC 382, to contend that merely on the basis of the disclosure statement, the petitioner cannot be denied the benefit of regular bail.

This Court has heard the learned counsel for the parties and has perused the paper book.

The Co-ordinate Bench of this Court in ***Mewa Singh’ case (supra)*** has held as under: -

“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.”*

The relevant portion of ***Daljit Singh's*** (*supra*) judgment 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

(MANJARI NEHRU KAUL)

JUDGE

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 coaccused. 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.”

Further, the relevant of the judgment in **Maulana Mohd. Amir Rashadi's case (supra)** 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.”

In the present case, it is not in dispute that the petitioner was not named in the FIR. The alleged recovery of 350 grams and 150 grams of Heroin is from the co-accused, namely, Gurmeet Singh and Baljinder Singh, respectively. The petitioner has been implicated solely on the basis of disclosure statement of the said co-accused Gurmeet Singh and Baljinder Singh. There are no call details that could link the petitioner and the said co-accused, as per the challan. Petitioner has been in custody since 14.10.2021 and the challan has already been presented and there are 13 witnesses, none of them have been examined and thus, the trial is likely to take long time, moreso, in view of the present pandemic. As all the witnesses are stated to be police officials, thus, the question of influencing them does not arise.

Keeping in view the above-said facts and circumstances and in view of the laid down ***Mewa Singh' case*** (supra); ***Daljit Singh's***

(*supra*) and **Maulana Mohd. Amir Rashadi's case** (*supra*), the present 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 / CJM, and subject to him not being required in any other case.

It is however made clear that in case the petitioner influences or threatens any witness, then it would be open to the State to move an application for cancellation of bail of the petitioner.

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.

February 14, 2022
naresh.k

(VIKAS BAHL)
JUDGE

Whether reasoned/speaking?	Yes
Whether reportable?	No