

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

(I) CRM-M-1798-2023 (O&M)

Ranjeet Singh @ Gurmandeep Singh Sidhu ...Petitioner

Versus

State of Haryana ...Respondent

(II) CRM-M-1846-2023 (O&M)

Mahesh Narang ...Petitioner

Versus

State of Haryana ...Respondent

Date of Decision: 18.01.2023

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE GURVINDER SINGH GILL

Present: Mr. Hitesh Verma, Advocate, for the petitioner
in CRM-M-1798-2023.

Mr. Sajeev Kodan, Advocate, for the petitioner
in CRM-M-1846-2023.

Mr. Gurmeet Singh, AAG, Haryana.

GURVINDER SINGH GILL, J. (Oral)

1. This order shall dispose off the aforesaid two petitions filed on behalf of Ranjeet Singh @ Gurmandeep Singh Sidhu and Mahesh Narang seeking grant of regular bail in respect of a case registered against them vide FIR No.71 dated 28.01.2022 at Police Station 32-33, Karnal, under Sections 420, 467, 468, 471 IPC and Section 12 of the Passports Act (Sections 120-B, 201, 166, 218 IPC and Sections 7, 7A, 8, 13 of the Prevention of Corruption Act added later on).

2. The allegations, in nutshell, are that a racket was being run by the accused for facilitating issuance of passports to various persons on the basis of forged documents. While petitioner Ranjit Singh is stated to be beneficiary inasmuch as a passport had been issued in his favour on the basis of forged documents in connivance with other co-accused, petitioner Mahesh Narang is stated to have facilitated issuance of passports on the basis of bogus documents in favour of several other persons.
3. Learned counsel appearing on behalf of the petitioner/s have submitted that they have falsely been implicated in the present case and that in any case, the passports had been issued after following due procedure including verification by the police. Learned counsel have further submitted that since some of the co-accused have already been granted bail, the petitioners also deserve the same concession on grounds of parity.
4. On the other hand, learned State counsel while opposing the petitions has submitted that in the present case some of the police officials were also hand & gloves with other accused and that false verification reports have been made in favour of the applicants (applicant for issuance of a passport) even though the said applicants were not residing at the given addresses. Learned State counsel has also submitted that while petitioner Mahesh Narang stands involved in 6 other cases, petitioner Ranjit Singh stands involved in 12 other cases. Learned State counsel has, however, informed that the petitioners have been behind bars since the last more than 10 months and that charges are yet to be framed and as many as 30 PWs have been cited.

5. This Court has considered rival submissions.
6. Without commenting anything as regards the merits of the case, but having regard to the custody of the petitioners, which is more than 10 months and also the fact that conclusion of trial is likely to take some time inasmuch as the trial has not even commenced till date and as many as 30 PWs have been cited, further detention of the petitioners will not serve any useful purpose. All the petitions, as such, are accepted and the petitioners are ordered to be released on regular bail on their furnishing bail bonds/surety bonds to the satisfaction of learned trial Court/Chief Judicial Magistrate/Duty Magistrate concerned.
7. A photocopy of this order be placed on the connected file.

(GURVINDER SINGH GILL)
JUDGE

18.01.2023
Vimal

Whether speaking/reasoned: **Yes/No**
Whether reportable: **Yes/No**