

IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA
AT CHANDIGARH

CRM-M-12763-2023
Reserved on: 21.04.2023
Pronounced on: 11.05.2023

Monu Soni ...Petitioner (s)
Versus
State of Punjab Respondent (s)

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE ANOOP CHITKARA

Present: Mr. Bachanpreet Singh, Advocate and
Mr. Manish Kumar, Advocate,
for the petitioner.

Mr. Harsimar Singh Sitta, DAG, Punjab.

ANOOP CHITKARA, J.

FIR No.	Dated	Police Station	Sections
102	09.12.2021	City-2, Abohar, District Fazilka	408, 420, 120-B IPC

1. The petitioner, incarcerated since 07-02-2023, upon his arrest in the FIR captioned above, has come up before this Court under Section 439 of Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (CrPC) seeking bail.
2. In paragraph 12 of the petition, it is declared that the accused has no criminal history.
3. Counsel for the petitioner contends that the pre-trial incarceration would cause an irreversible injustice to the petitioner and family.
4. Counsel appearing for the State contends that the petitioner has indulged in cheating and *thuggee* is raising its ugly head, and it’s the time to nip the evil in the bud.

REASONING:

5. The petitioner is a first offender, and one of the relevant factors would be to provide an opportunity to course-correct. Even a *prima facie* perusal of paragraphs 5 & 6 of the bail petition needs consideration for bail.
6. In the present case, the maximum sentence imposable for the offences mentioned in FIR does not exceed seven years. Thus, directions passed in Arnesh Kumar v. State of Bihar, (2014) 8 SCC 273, (Para 13), apply to this petition, wherein Hon’ble

Supreme Court directed all the State Governments to instruct its police officers not to arrest the accused automatically when the offence is punishable with imprisonment for a term which may be less than seven years or which may extend to seven years; whether with or without fine.

7. 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 elaborate and stringent conditions. In Sushila Aggarwal, (2020) 5 SCC 1, Para 92, the Constitutional Bench held that unusually, subject to the evidence produced, the Courts can impose restrictive conditions.

8. 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.

9. In Mahidul Sheikh v. State of Haryana, CRM-33030-2021 in CRA-S-363-2020, decided on 14-01-2022, Para 53, this Court observed,

[53]. The pragmatic approach is that while granting bail with sureties, the “Court” and the “Arresting Officer” should give a choice to the accused to either furnish surety bonds or to handover a fixed deposit, or direct electronic money transfer where such facility is available, or creating a lien over his bank account. The accused should also have a further option to switch between the modes. The option lies with the accused to choose between the sureties and deposits and not with the Court or the arresting officer.

10. Give above, provided the accused is not required in any other case, 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/-) and shall furnish one surety of Rs. Twenty-five thousand (INR 25,000/-), to the satisfaction of the concerned Court/ Judicial Magistrate having the jurisdiction over the Police Station conducting the investigation, and in case of non-availability, any nearest Ilaqa Magistrate/duty Magistrate. Before accepting the sureties, the concerned Court must satisfy that if the accused fails to appear in Court, then such surety is capable of producing the petitioner before the Court.

11. In the alternative, the petitioner may furnish a personal bond of Rs. Ten Thousand only (INR 10,000/-), and hand over to the concerned court a fixed deposit(s) for Rs. Ten Thousand only (INR 10,000/-), made in favour of Chief Judicial Magistrate of the concerned district. Said fixed deposit may be made from any of the banks where the stake of the State is more than 50%, or any of the well-established and stable private banks, with the clause of automatic renewal of the principal and the interest reverting to the linked account.

12. The fixed deposit need not necessarily be made from the applicant's account. If such a fixed deposit is made in physical form, i.e., on paper, then the original receipt shall be handed over to the concerned court. If made online, its printout, countersigned by the accused, shall be given; and the depositor shall get the online liquidation disabled. The applicant shall inform the concerned branch of the bank at the earliest that it has been tendered as surety. Such information be sent either by e-mail or by post/courier about the fixed deposit, whether made on paper or in any other mode, along with its number and FIR number. After that, the applicant shall hand over such proof and endorsement to the concerned police station. Such court shall have a lien over the deposit until the case's closure, or discharged by substitution, or up to the expiry of the period mentioned under S. 437-A CrPC, 1973, as the case may be. Subject to the proceedings under S. 446 CrPC, the entire amount of fixed deposit, less taxes, if any, shall be endorsed/returned to the depositor.

13. It shall be the total discretion of the applicant to choose between surety bonds and fixed deposits. It shall also be open for the applicant to apply to the investigator or the concerned court to substitute fixed deposit with surety bonds and vice-versa.

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. The petitioner shall be in deemed custody for Section 27 of the Indian Evidence Act. The petitioner shall join the investigation as and when called by the Investigating Officer or any Superior Officer; and shall cooperate with the investigation at all further stages as might be required. In the event of failure to do so, it will be open for the prosecution to seek cancellation of the bail. Whenever the investigation occurs within the police premises, the petitioner shall not be called before 8 AM and shall be let off before 6 PM, and shall not be subjected to third-degree, indecent language, inhuman treatment, etc.

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. 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 ten days of release from prison 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.

19. Within ten days of release from prison, the petitioner shall forward to the Investigator/SHO and the complainant/victim(s) the complete details of bank account numbers with addresses, fixed deposits, DEMAT account numbers, the current market value of jewellery, sovereign metals, all precious articles, held either individually or jointly, and cash-in-hand.

20. 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.

21. 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.

22. If the petitioner finds bond amount beyond social and financial reach, it may be brought to the notice of this Court for appropriate reduction. Further, if the petitioner finds 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.

23. 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.
24. 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.
25. 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.
26. In return for the protection from incarceration, the Court believes that the accused shall also reciprocate through desirable behavior.
27. The SHO of the concerned police station or the investigating officer shall arrange to send a copy of this order, preferably a soft copy, to the complainant and the victim, within two days. If the victim(s) notice any violation of this order, they may inform the SHO of the concerned police station, the trial court, or even this court.
28. *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.*

Petition allowed in aforesaid terms. All pending applications, if any, stand disposed.

(ANOOP CHITKARA)
JUDGE

11.05.2023
Jyoti-II

Whether speaking/reasoned	:	Yes
Whether reportable	:	No