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IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA AT
CHANDIGARH

CRM-M-20124-2023 (O & M)

Date of Decision: 17.07.2023

Nakul Bedi

... Petitioner

Versus

State of Haryana

...Respondent

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE JASJIT SINGH BEDI

Present: Mr. Vinod Ghai, Sr. Advocate,
with Mr. Arnav Ghai, Advocate and
Mr. Saurav Dogra, Advocate,
for the petitioner.

Mr. Kanwar Sanjiv Kumar, AAG, Haryana.

JASJIT SINGH BEDI, J.

The prayer in the present petition under Section 439 Cr.P.C. is for the grant of regular bail to the petitioner in case FIR No.94 dated 25.03.2021 under Sections 379, 34, 117, 120-B, 413 IPC, Sections 15/16 15(iv) of the Petroleum and Minerals Pipelines (Acquisition of Rights of User in Land) Act, 1962, Sections 3 & 4 of the Explosive Substances Act, 1908 and Sections 3 and 4 of the Prevention of Damage to Public Property Act, 1984 as well as Sections 25-54-59 of the Arms Act registered at Police Station Bawal, Rewari.

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2. The present FIR came to be registered on the basis of a complaint filed by Mahender, Supervisor at Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL). He alleged that recently they had got an order of security of a pipeline and on No.968300 an oil leak alarm was received, upon which the guard of their security agency and other higher officers had checked the line. The information was also given to the police on 25.03.2021 and police officials inspected the spot. It was found that two valves of two inches and one valve of half inch had been fitted on the pipeline. The name of the owner of the said field was stated to be Hawa Singh.

Pursuant to the registration of the FIR, during the course of investigation, one accused Ankit, who had been arrested in connection with FIR No.276 of 2021 registered at Police Station Sector 29, Panipat admitted his involvement in FIR No.112 of 2021 at Police Station Bawal. As the crime complained of in the said FIR and the present one being of similar nature, he was joined in the investigation of the present case as well. During the course of interrogation, he disclosed the names of his other accomplices and got recovered a sum of Rs.14,200/- being his share.

Co-accused Sandeep was arrested on 18.08.2021 and consequent upon the completion of the investigation against Sandeep and

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Ankit, the report under Section 173(2) Cr.P.C. was presented against them.

On 29.01.2022, co-accused Harish alias Mistri, Ravinder alias Babloo, Vijay alias Ajay, Binder, Suraj, Manish alias Sund were arrested in the present case. They suffered their respective disclosure statements and the name of Pawan surfaced in the said statements. It was found that the petitioner had been purchasing stolen oil from the said accused. Harish alias Mistri got recovered the tools used in the commission of the crime alongwith Vehicle No.HR-26-BG-9065 and a sum of Rs.25,200/- during the course of investigation of FIR No.112 of 2021. Co-accused Binder got recovered a sum of Rs.22,000/- and Ritz car bearing No.DL-3CBJ-3980 during the course of investigation of FIR No.112 of 2021. Likewise, other co-accused also got recovered money and the vehicles used by them.

Co-accused Ravinder alias Chirkut got recovered a tanker full of oil from the godown of co-accused-Pawan.

On 03.08.2022, co-accused Sunny was joined in the investigation and he disclosed that there was a gang involved in the commission of theft of oil from the pipelines who were working under the stewardship of the prime accused-Sunil Banda. The said gang had been operating in the areas of Districts Rewari, Sonapat, Rohtak and Jhajjar alongwith certain other districts and had been committing the theft

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of oil. It transpired that co-accused/Pawan had been repeatedly purchasing stolen oil from the gang and had been supplying it from his godown in his vehicles. Pawan was found to be involved in several other cases as well.

The supplementary challan was submitted against the co-accused, namely, Harish, Ravinder, Vijay, Binder, Suraj, Manish and Sunny on 28.04.2022.

On 28.07.2022, co-accused Dinesh Rathi and Narender alias Anna were arrested on receipt of appropriate incriminating evidence against them. A country-made weapon alongwith two cartridges were recovered from Dinesh aforesaid alongwith a welding machine and a sum of Rs.1400/- whereas Narender got recovered a sum of Rs.750/-.

On 23.08.2022, the petitioner-Nakul Bedi alongwith co-accused Desh Raj and Pawan were arrested in the present case. They suffered their respective statements stating their involvement in the present case. In pursuance of the said disclosure statements, petitioner-Nakul Bedi got recovered a sum of Rs.60,000/- being the proceeds of the stolen oil and co-accused Desh Raj got recovered a sum of Rs.12,000/-. Co-accused/Pawan got recovered a sum of Rs.15,000/- and consequent upon the completion of the investigation qua them, a supplementary final report was submitted to the Court on 21.11.2022.

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Co-accused Sunil alias Banda was arrested on 07.11.2022 and consequent upon completion of the investigation qua him, a supplementary final report was submitted in the Court.

Thereafter, a co-accused Amit Rana was arrested on 11.04.2023.

3. The learned Senior counsel for the petitioner contends that the petitioner has not been named in the FIR but has been arrayed as an accused later on as per the disclosure statements of the arrested accused. The said disclosure statements have no evidentiary value in the eyes of law. As the petitioner was in custody since 23.08.2022 and none of the 30 prosecution witnesses had been examined so far, he was entitled to the concession of bail, moreso, when in five of the other cases registered against him vide FIR No.112 dated 10.04.2021 under Sections 379/413/34/117/411/420/467/468/471/120-B/201 IPC, Sections 15/16 and 15(IV) of the Petroleum and Mineral Pipe Line Act, 2021, 3/4 of the Explosive Substances Act, Sections 3/4 Prevention of Damage to the Public Property Act, 1984 at Police Station Bawal, FIR No.264 dated 26.12.2021 under Sections 379, 413, 34, 117, 411, 420, 467, 468, 471, 120-B and 201 IPC, Sections 15/16 and 15(IV) of the Petroleum and Minerals Pipelines Act, 2021, Sections 3 and 4 of the Explosive Substances Act, 1908 and Sections 3 and 4 of the Prevention of Damage to Public Property Act, 1984 at Police Station Rampura, FIR No.590

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dated 11.12.2020 under Sections 3 and 4 of the Prevention of Damage to Public Property Act, 1984, Section 15 of the Petroleum and Minerals Pipelines (Acquisition of Rights of User in Land) Act, 1962, Sections 3, 4 of the Explosive Substances Act, 1908 and Sections 285, 34, 379, 427, 411, 413 and 120-B IPC registered at Police Station Kharkhoda Sonipat, FIR No.470 dated 20.06.2021 under Sections 15 of Petroleum and Minerals Pipelines (Acquisition of Rights of User in Land) Act, 1962, Sections 3 and 4 of Explosive Substances Act, 1908 and Sections 285, 34, 379, 411, 413, 420, 427, 467, 468, 471 and Sections 3 and 4 of the Prevention of Damage to Public Property Act, 1984 registered at Police Station Kharkhoda, District Sonapat, he had already been granted the concession of bail by this Court vide orders dated 28.04.2023 passed in CRM-M-20143-2023, order dated 12.05.2023 passed in CRM-M-20150-2023, order dated 18.05.2023 passed in CRM-M-20165-2023 and order dated 06.07.2023 passed in CRM-M-29065-2023 respectively whereas in FIR No.93 dated 26.03.2021 under Sections 379/286/268/285/34 IPC and Sections 3/4 of the Explosive Substances Act, 1908 and Section 3 of the Motor Spirit and High Speed Diesel Order, 1908, Sections 15, 16 PMP Act, 1962 at Police Station Badli, District Jhajjar, he had been granted the similar concession vide order dated 24.04.2023 in CIS No.BA-611-2023 passed by the Additional Sessions Judge, Jhajjar. He contends that in FIR No.550 dated 04.12.2020, FIR No.603 dated 20.12.2020, FIR No.162

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dated 23.03.2021, FIR No.127 dated 03.08.2021, FIR No.350 dated 09.09.2021 and FIR No.53 dated 22.01.2022, the name of the present petitioner does not find mention.

4. The learned counsel for the State, on the other hand, contends that the petitioner is the person who used to purchase the stolen oil at a discounted rate and it cannot be believed that he was unaware of the fact that the said oil had been stolen. He contends that the petitioner was an accused in 11 other cases registered vide FIRs No.550 dated 04.12.2020 under Sections 379, 265, 427, 34 IPC and 15 PMP Act, 1962 and 3/4 PDPP Act, 1984, Sections 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 ESM Act, 1966 at Police Station Kharkhoda, District Sonipat, FIR No.603 dated 20.12.2020 under Sections 379/265/427/34 IPC and 15 PMP Act, 1962 and 3/4 PDPP Act, 1984, Sections 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 ESM Act, 1966 at Police Station Kharkhoda, District Sonipat, FIR No.162 dated 23.03.2021 under Sections 379/266/427/34 IPC and Section 4 of the Explosive Substances Act, 1908 and Section 3 of the Motor Spirit and High Speed Diesel Order, 1908, Sections 15, 16 PMP Act and Section 3/4 of PDPP Act, 1984 at Police Station Sampla, FIR No.93 dated 26.03.2021 under Sections 379/286/268/285/34 IPC and Sections 3/4 of the Explosive Substances Act, 1908 and Section 3 of the Motor Spirit and High Speed Diesel Order, 1908, Sections 15, 16 PMP Act, 1962 at Police Station Badli, FIR No.127 dated 03.08.2021 under Sections 379/286/268/285/34

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IPC, Section 15, 16 PMP Act, 1962 and Section 4 PDP Act at Police Station Machhrauli, FIR No.350 dated 09.09.2021 under Sections 379/511 IPC and Petroleum Pipe Line Act, 3/4 PDPP Act at Police Station Jhajjar, FIR No.450 dated 23.12.2021 under Sections 379/285/511/34 IPC, Section 15 PMP Act, 1962 and Section 3/4 PDPP Act, 1984 at Police Station Asodha, FIR No.264 dated 26.12.2021 under Sections 379, 413, 34, 117, 411, 420, 467, 468, 471, 120-B and 201 IPC, Sections 15/16 and 15(IV) of Petroleum and Mineral Pipe Line Act, 2021, Sections 3/4 Explosive Substances Act, 1908 and Section 3/4 PDPP Act, 1984 at Police Station Rampura, FIR No.75 dated 29.07.2021 under Sections 379/34 IPC, 15 PMP Act, 1962 and Sections 3/4 PDPP Act, 1984 at Police Station Rohrai, District Rewari, FIR No. 53 dated 22.01.2022 under Sections 268/285/379/511 IPC and Section 15 PMP Act, 1962 and Sections 3/4 PDPP Act, 1984 at Police Station Sampla, FIR No.112 dated 10.04.2021 under Sections 379/413/34/117/411/420/467/468/471/120-B/201 IPC, Sections 15/16 and 15(IV) Petroleum and Mineral Pipe Line Act, 2021, Sections 3/4 Explosive Substance Act, 1908 and 3/4 PDPP Act, 1984 at Police Station Bawal, and therefore, the criminal antecedents of the petitioner did not entitle him to the grant of bail. He, however, concedes the fact that the petitioner is in custody since 23.08.2022, none of the 30 prosecution witnesses have been examined so far and in five cases of identical nature

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arising out of FIR No.112 dated 10.04.2021, FIR No.264 dated 26.12.2021, FIR No.590 dated 11.12.2020, FIR No.470 dated 20.06.2021 and FIR No.93 dated 26.03.2021, the petitioner has already been granted the concession of bail either by this Court or by the Sessions Court.

5. I have heard the learned counsel for the parties.

6. Admittedly, the petitioner is named in the disclosure statements of his co-accused. Whether the other evidence available against the petitioner is sufficient to affix liability upon him would be a matter of adjudication during the course of the Trial. At this stage, the petitioner is in custody since 23.08.2022, investigation stands completed and none of the 30 prosecution witnesses have been examined so far. In five other similar cases registered against him vide FIR No.112 dated 10.04.2021 under Sections 379/413/34/117/411/420/467/468/471/120-B/201 IPC, Sections 15/16 and 15(IV) of the Petroleum and Mineral Pipe Line Act, 2021, 3/4 of the Explosive Substances Act, Sections 3/4 Prevention of Damage to the Public Property Act, 1984 at Police Station Bawal, FIR No.264 dated 26.12.2021 under Sections 379, 413, 34, 117, 411, 420, 467, 468, 471, 120-B and 201 IPC, Sections 15/16 and 15(IV) of the Petroleum and Minerals Pipelines Act, 2021, Sections 3 and 4 of the Explosive Substances Act, 1908 and Sections 3 and 4 of the Prevention of Damage to Public Property Act, 1984 at Police Station Rampura, FIR No.590 dated 11.12.2020 under Sections 3 and 4 of the

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Prevention of Damage to Public Property Act, 1984, Section 15 of the Petroleum and Minerals Pipelines (Acquisition of Rights of User in Land) Act, 1962, Sections 3, 4 of the Explosive Substances Act, 1908 and Sections 285, 34, 379, 427, 411, 413 and 120-B IPC registered at Police Station Kharkhoda Sonipat, FIR No.470 dated 20.06.2021 under Sections 15 of Petroleum and Minerals Pipelines (Acquisition of Rights of User in Land) Act, 1962, Sections 3 and 4 of Explosive Substances Act, 1908 and Sections 285, 34, 379, 411, 413, 420, 427, 467, 468, 471 and Sections 3 and 4 of the Prevention of Damage to Public Property Act, 1984 registered at Police Station Kharkhoda, District Sonapat, he has already been granted the concession of bail by this Court vide orders dated 28.04.2023 passed in CRM-M-20143-2023, order dated 12.05.2023 passed in CRM-M-20150-2023, order dated 18.05.2023 passed in CRM-M-20165-2023 and order dated 06.07.2023 passed in CRM-M-29065-2023 respectively whereas in FIR No.93 dated 26.03.2021 under Sections 379/286/268/285/34 IPC and Sections 3/4 of the Explosive Substances Act, 1908 and Section 3 of the Motor Spirit and High Speed Diesel Order, 1908, Sections 15, 16 PMP Act, 1962 at Police Station Badli, District Jhajjar, he has been granted the similar concession vide order dated 24.04.2023 in CIS No.BA-611-2023 passed by the Additional Sessions Judge, Jhajjar. In FIR No.550 dated 04.12.2020, FIR No.603 dated 20.12.2020, FIR No.162 dated 23.03.2021, FIR No.127 dated

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03.08.2021, FIR No.350 dated 09.09.2021 and FIR No.53 dated 22.01.2022, the name of the present petitioner does not find mention. Therefore, his further incarceration in the present case is not required.

7. Thus, without commenting upon the merits of the case, the present petition is allowed and the petitioner-Nakul Bedi is ordered to be released on regular bail subject to his furnishing requisite bail bonds/surety bonds to the satisfaction of the concerned Trial Court/Duty Magistrate.

8. The petitioner shall appear on the first Monday of every month before the police station concerned till the conclusion of the trial and furnish an affidavit each time that he is not involved in any case/crime other than the case(s) mentioned in this order

9. In addition, the petitioner (or through someone else on his behalf) shall prepare an FDR in the sum of Rs.2,00,000/- and deposit the same with the Trial Court. The same would be liable to be forfeited as per law in case of the absence of the petitioner from Trial without sufficient cause.

(JASJIT SINGH BEDI)
JUDGE

July 17, 2023
sukhpreet

Whether speaking/reasoned:- Yes/No

Whether reportable:- Yes/No