

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

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CRM-M-24313-2021 (O&M)

Date of decision: 25.07.2023

Joginder Singh

..Petitioner

Versus

State of Punjab

..Respondent

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE AMAN CHAUDHARY

Present: Mr. Parminder S. Sekhon, Advocate for the petitioner

Mr. Manipal Singh Atwal, DAG, Punjab

AMAN CHAUDHARY, J.

1. The present petition has been filed under Section 439 Cr.P.C. for grant of regular bail to the petitioner in FIR No.233 dated 17.11.2020, registered under Sections 15, 15-C and 18 of NDPS Act, at Police Station City Fazilka, District Fazilka.

2. Learned counsel contends that in the present case, petitioner has been in custody for more than 1 year and 6 months. He was granted interim bail by this Court vide order dated 13.01.2023 on medical grounds and there has been no complaint regarding misuse of the same. The petitioner alleges false implication in the case. He is not involved in any other case under the NDPS Act. Out of 16 prosecution witnesses, only 10 have been examined.

3. The custody certificate dated 24.07.2023, filed by learned State counsel is taken on record. As per the same, the petitioner is behind bars for 1 year, 6 months and 19 days.

4. Learned State counsel opposes the bail on the ground the

petitioner was apprehended at the spot and commercial quantity of contraband was recovered from him. He is however unable to controvert the submissions made regarding the stage of the case, the fact of petitioner not having misused the liberty while on interim bail and his non-involvement in any other case under the NDPS Act.

5. Heard.

6. Hon'ble The Supreme Court of India in the case of **Dheeraj Kumar Shukla vs. The State of Uttar Pradesh**, SLP (Criminal) No.6690/2022 decided on 25.01.2023 observed that in case of long custody period, involving quantity recovered to be of commercial nature, where the trial is yet to commence, though charges had been framed, the condition of Section 37 of NDPS Act can be dispensed with. Similarly, in the case of **Shariful Islam @ Sarif vs. The State of West Bengal** SLP (Crl.) No.4173/2022, decided on 04.08.2022, Hon'ble The Supreme Court of India granted bail to the petitioner in a case of recovery of commercial quantity of contraband, considering incarceration for over 1 year and 6 months and there being no likelihood of completion of trial in the near future. In the case of **Bhupender Singh vs. Narcotic Control Bureau** (2022) 2 RCR (Crl.) 706, the Division Bench of this Court observed with regard to achieving balance between right to speedy trial guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution of India and rigors of Section 37 of NDPS Act. This Court in the case of **Balraj Singh vs. State of Punjab** CRM-M-57386-2022, decided on 14.12.2022 has followed the dictum laid down by Hon'ble The Supreme Court of India and granted the bail to the petitioner therein after he had undergone total custody of 1 year and 6 months. In the case of **Munasi Masih vs. State of Punjab**, CRM-M-31504-2022,

decided on 06.02.2023, this Court granted bail to a first offender from whom commercial quantity of contraband had been recovered and only 2 out of 13 PWs have been examined, by observing that in view of delayed trial, the rigors of Section 37 of NDPS Act can be diluted to an extent and the petitioner can be granted bail, keeping in mind the right to a speedy trial as envisaged Article 21 of the Constitution of India.

7. Considering the facts and circumstances of the case, in particular that the petitioner is in custody for the last 1 year, 6 months and 19 days; not involved in any other case under NDPS Act; has not misused the concession of interim bail; only 10 out of 16 witnesses have yet been examined; the trial is likely to take a considerable time, thus further incarceration of the petitioner would be violative of his right enshrined under Article 21 of the Constitution of India and the rigors of Section 37 of NDPS Act can be diluted bearing in mind the right to a speedy trial, thus, the present petition for grant of regular bail deserves to be allowed.

8. As a result, the present petition is allowed. Since, the petitioner is on interim bail, he is directed to surrender and furnish fresh bail/surety bonds to the satisfaction of trial Court/Duty Magistrate concerned. On his doing so, he shall be released on bail, subject to him not being required in any other case. The petitioner shall abide by the following conditions:-

- (i) The petitioner will not tamper with the evidence during the trial.
- (ii) The petitioner will not pressurize/ intimidate the prosecution witnesses.
- (iii) The petitioner will appear before the trial Court on each and every date fixed, unless is exempted by a specific order of Court.
- (iv) The petitioner shall not commit an offence

similar to the offence of which, he is an accused, or for commission of which he is suspected of.

- (v) The petitioner shall not directly or indirectly coerce, induce, threaten or promise to any person acquainted with the facts of the case so as to dissuade him/her from disclosing such facts to the Court or to any police officer or tamper with the evidence in any manner.
- (vi) The petitioner shall not in any manner misuse his liberty.
- (vii) The petitioner shall furnish his address and mobile number to the Trial Court forthwith and shall not change the same till the conclusion of the trial and in case for any reason, the petitioner seeks to change any of the aforesaid, the same shall be done only with prior intimation to the learned Trial Court, stating the reason for the same.
- (viii) The petitioner shall not leave the country without prior permission of the trial Court.
- (ix) The trial Court/Duty Magistrate may impose any other condition, as deemed appropriate while releasing the petitioner.

9. It is made abundantly clear that in case there is any breach of the aforesaid conditions, the State shall be at liberty to seek cancellation of bail as granted to the petitioner by this order.

10. In view of the above, it is clarified that the observations made herein are limited for the purpose of present proceedings and would not be construed as an opinion on the merits of the case and the trial would proceed independently of the aforesaid observations.

25.07.2023
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(AMAN CHAUDHARY)
JUDGE

Whether speaking/reasoned : Yes/No

Whether reportable : Yes/No