

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

**CRM-M-21562-2023
Date of Decision: 04.05.2023**

Gurpreet Singh @ Joban

..... Petitioner

Versus

State of Punjab

..... Respondent

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE HARSH BUNGER

Present: Mr. Gursimran Singh Bhatia, Advocate
for the petitioner.

Mr. Harjinder Singh Sidhu, AAG, Punjab.

HARSH BUNGER J. (ORAL)

1. Petitioner (Gurpreet Singh @ Joban) has filed the present petition filed under Section 482 of the Code of Criminal Procedure is for setting aside order dated 02.03.2022 (Annexure P-4), passed by the Court of Additional Sessions Judge, Amritsar, whereby bail of the petitioner was cancelled, their bail bonds/surety bonds were forfeited to the State and non-bailable warrants of arrest were also issued against him in FIR No.36 dated 14.02.2019 (Annexure P-1), under Section 22 of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, registered at Police Station Chattiwind, District Amritsar Rural.

2. Learned counsel for the petitioner submits that the petitioner was falsely implicated in the present FIR (Annexure P-1) and alleged recovery of 79 loose tablets was effected from him. The petitioner was

granted the concession of regular bail by the Court of Additional Sessions

Judge, Amritsar vide order dated 13.03.2019 by observing the fact that the report from Forensic Science Laboratory was awaited and later on, it was found as per the said Report that the alleged recovery effected from the petitioner was non-commercial in nature. Learned counsel submits that the petitioner was regularly appearing on various dates before the trial Court. Subsequently on 11.01.2022, the case was adjourned due to the outbreak of COVID-19 and the petitioner was informed that he will be served with notice for the date of his appearance before the trial Court. However, no notice or intimation, regarding the next date of hearing before the trial Court, was received by the petitioner, as such when the case of petitioner was listed on the next date (02.03.2022), he could not appear before the trial Court, whereupon bail of the petitioner was cancelled, his bail bonds/surety bonds were forfeited to the State and warrants of arrest were also ordered to be issued against him by the trial Court vide order dated 02.03.2022 (Annexure P-4). Later on, it came to the notice of petitioner that the counsel representing him in the trial Court was also not appearing on his behalf on the adjourned dates. It is stated that the next date fixed before the trial Court is 05.06.2023. Learned counsel submits that there was no intention on the part of petitioner to delay the proceedings and his absence before the trial court was neither intentional nor deliberate but for the aforesaid reason. Learned counsel further submits that the petitioner is ready and willing to surrender before the trial Court and join the proceedings, if he is granted one opportunity to do so. Learned counsel submits that the petitioner undertakes to appear on each and every date before the trial court and to abide by all the terms and conditions to be imposed by this Court or by the trial Court.

Learned State counsel opposes prayer of the petitioner raised in the instant petition by stating that he has jumped the bail and has not followed the conditions of bail, thus petitioner is not entitled to any relief.

I have heard the arguments of learned counsel for the parties and have also perused the paper book as well as the impugned order dated 02.03.2022 (Annexure P-4).

A perusal of order dated 02.03.2022 (Annexure P-4) reflects that the trial Court proceeded to pass the impugned order on account of absence of petitioner on 02.03.2022. It is observed that at times, the accused or his counsel can be prevented by sufficient reasons to put an appearance before the Court on a given date and every such absence cannot be necessarily construed as a deliberate and willful absence.

This Court vide judgment dated 18.07.2018, passed in CRM-M-29461-2018, titled as **“Naveen Rao Vs. Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) ACB, Chandigarh**, while considering somewhat similar issue, observed as under:

“- x - x -

Keeping in view the conduct of the petitioner as he came back immediately after a period of 20 days, it appears that there was no intention on the part of the petitioner to remain absent. It can be an inadvertent mistake/lapse on his part. Moreover, the petitioner is NRI and ready to abide by all terms and conditions to be imposed by this Court or by the trial Court.

Same issue was there before the Kerala High Court in Mahesh vs. State of Kerala, 2011 (1) Cri.C.C. 834 wherein the condition of bail was violated and due to absence of the accused-petitioner, bail was cancelled. The relevant portion of said judgment is reproduced as under: -

“20. To cancel the bail under section 437(5) or 439(2)

of the Code very cogent and overwhelming reasons are also to be stated. The Court shall not cancel bail in a routine manner, under section 437(5) or 439(2) of the Code, as per law. This is the settled position of law. But, the position under Section 446-A of the Code is totally different. If the Magistrate Court is satisfied that there is breach of condition of bail bond and thereby, forfeiture of the bond, the bond automatically stands cancelled under Section 446-A of the Code.

*21. However, a mere violation of condition in the bail order will not lead to automatic cancellation of bail bond under Section 446-A of the Code. Apart from violation of condition in the bail order, the Court must also be satisfied that the bond is forfeited then alone, bail bond would stand cancelled and the accused can be proceeded against. It is the forfeiture of the bail bond which is crucial under Section 446-A of the Code. If the breach of condition is not wilful and is due to reasons beyond his control, it cannot be said that there is forfeiture of bond. The question is dealt with in **Rajan v. State of Kerala, 2006 (4) KLT 429** and it is held thus:*

"A bond for appearance can be said to be forfeited, only if there is a wilful default on the part of the accused in not appearing before the Court. It is needless to say that an accused can be absent in Court due to various reasons on a particular occasion. When the counsel files an application, it follows that the accused was vigilant and he had taken steps to instruct his counsel to file an application. Such an accused cannot be said to have forfeited the bond by reason of any wilful default. It is only in cases where there is wilful default on the part of the accused to appear in Court, forfeiture of bond

will follow and penalty will incur."

22. In State of Kerala v. Anil Kumar, 2005 (4) KLT SN 59, referring to cancellation of bail, this Court held thus: "an innocent violation of any condition imposed by the Court will not ipso facto lead to cancellation of bail under section 439(2) Criminal Procedure Code. The crucial and vital question is whether there has been deliberate, contumacious and unjustified infraction of the conditions imposed by the Court". It is needless to say that if the Court cannot cancel bail, if violation of condition is not wilful or deliberate, it is only reasonable to hold that such violation (which is not wilful or intentional) shall also not lead to an automatic cancellation of bail bond under Section 446-A of the Code."

In the present case also, the bail/surety bonds have been cancelled as the petitioner left India without prior permission of the Court. An application for exemption from personal appearance was also moved, which was dismissed. The petitioner is NRI and he went abroad without seeking any permission from the Court, which has been stated to be inadvertent as he did not go through the terms and conditions of bail but the circumstances were beyond his control. The petitioner immediately came back to India and came to know that his bail bonds have been cancelled. There was no intention on his part to remain absent or to avoid the Court proceedings. The petitioner remained ill when he was abroad, remained there for a period of 20 days and could not come back immediately.

Accordingly, the present petition is allowed and the petitioner is directed to surrender before the trial Court on the next date of hearing i.e., 19.07.2018 by furnishing an undertaking before the trial Court that he will attend the Court proceedings regularly and will not leave the country without prior permission of the Court and abide by all

terms and conditions to be imposed by the trial Court. He is directed to be released by the trial Court by furnishing adequate surety/bail bonds to its satisfaction subject to payment of cost of Rs.25000/- to be deposited with the trial Court.

- x - x -"

In the present case also, the bail of the petitioner was cancelled and his bail bonds/surety bonds were forfeited to the State as he did not appear on the date fixed i.e. 02.03.2022, before the trial Court because of the reason stated above.

Keeping in view the aforementioned facts and circumstances and also considering the submissions of learned counsel for the petitioner that there was no intention on part of the petitioner to remain absent, this Court is inclined to afford one opportunity to petitioner to mend his ways. Moreover, joining of proceedings by the petitioner, would ensure finalization of proceedings.

Considering the above, the present petition is disposed of with a direction to the petitioners to appear before the trial Court on or before 05.06.2023 and upon his appearance, the Court shall release him on bail subject to his furnishing fresh bail bonds/surety bonds to its satisfaction subject to payment of Rs.5,000/-, as costs, to be deposited by the petitioner, with the concerned District Bar Association. The petitioner shall also give his undertaking by way of affidavit before the trial Court that he will attend the Court proceedings regularly, unless specifically exempted by the Court.

However, the concerned Station House Officer shall be informed about the release of petitioner and the petitioner shall inform the concerned Station House Officer about his address, at which he intend to

reside during the pendency of trial, and any change in the address shall be

communicated to the concerned Station House Officer, forthwith. The petitioner would also furnish his mobile number to the concerned Station House Officer and keep his mobile's location till the conclusion of trial.

In case, the petitioner do not appear before the trial Court on or before the date fixed, i.e. 05.06.2023, then the instant petition shall be deemed to have been dismissed.

Present petition is disposed of in the aforesaid terms.

All pending application(s), if any, shall also stand closed.

04.05.2023
Apurva

(HARSH BUNGER)
JUDGE

1. Whether speaking/reasoned : Yes/No
2. Whether reportable : Yes/No