

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

211

CRM-M-48092-2023(O&M)
Date of decision: 13.10.2023

Piara Lal

...Petitioner

Versus

State of Punjab

...Respondent

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE AMAN CHAUDHARY

Present: Mr. Bhupinder K. Bhangu, Advocate for the petitioner

Mr. Manipal Singh Atwal, DAG, Punjab

AMAN CHAUDHARY, J.

1. Prayer in the present petition filed under Section 439 Cr.P.C. is for grant of regular bail to the petitioner in case FIR No.127 dated 27.12.2021 registered under Sections 15, 25, 29, 61 and 85 of NDPS Act,1985 at Police Station Talwandi Chaudhrian, District Kapurthala.
2. Learned counsel contends that the petitioner, aged 55 years, is in custody for 1 year and about 10 months. He has been falsely implicated in the present case. There is non-compliance of mandatory provisions of Sections 50, 52-A and 57 of NDPS Act. No independent witness has been joined at the time of recovery. The polythene bags allegedly containing poppy husk that were recovered from the cavity of the truck were all emptied on a tarpaulin and transferred into 25 plastic bags, thereafter, samples were separated from these bags as such they cannot be considered representative samples of the original polythene bags. Co-accused Gurdit Singh has been granted anticipatory bail vide order dated 27.07.2022, Annexure P-3 and co-accused Surinder Singh,

Didar Singh @ Kaddu and Jasbir Singh @ Kala have been granted regular bail by this Court vide orders dated 03.08.2023 and 12.09.2023, Annexures P-4 to P-6 respectively, after being in custody for more than 1 year, 7 months. The petitioner is not involved in any other case under the NDPS Act. Charges were framed on 11.05.2023 and none out of 13 prosecution witnesses has been examined.

3. The custody certificate dated 12.10.2023, filed by learned State counsel is taken on record, as per which, the petitioner is behind bars for 1 year, 9 months and 14 days.

4. Learned State counsel opposes the bail on the ground that commercial quantity of contraband was recovered from the petitioner who was apprehended at the spot alongwith two other co-accused. He is however unable to controvert the submissions made regarding the stage of the case, petitioner being not involved in any other case under NDPS Act and co-accused having been granted bail.

5. Heard.

6. This Court in **Poonam Devi Rao vs. State of Punjab** passed in CRM-M-32287-2021 on 31.08.2022 granted bail to the petitioner after custody of about 1 year and 7 months by taking into consideration the judgment in **Amani Fidel Chris vs. Narcotics Control Bureau**, Crl. Appeal No.1027 of 2015, decided on 13.03.2020 and observing that opium recovered from 26 polythene bags from a vehicle that weighed 20 kg. 110 grams was put in a blue colour drum and thereafter, the samples were collected and the mixture was made homogeneous, wherefrom the representative samples were collected, instead of drawing one sample in duplicate from each package/ container in case of seizure of more than

one package/container as provided in para no.1.7 of the Standing Order No.1/88 dated 15.03.1988, issued by NCB. Thus, as held in **Amani Fidel Chris (supra)**, the original sanctity of the case property in individual polythene bags was lost. The SLP against the said order was dismissed on 27.02.2023. Hon'ble The Supreme Court 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. 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. 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 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 **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 last 1 year, 9 months and 14 days; not involved in any other case under the NDPS Act; co-accused have been granted bail; charges were framed on 11.05.2023 and out of 13 prosecution witnesses, none has been examined so far; 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. The petitioner is ordered to be released on regular bail, subject to his furnishing bail/surety bonds to the satisfaction of trial Court/Duty Magistrate concerned and subject to his 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.

13.10.2023
ashok

(AMAN CHAUDHARY)
JUDGE

Whether speaking/reasoned : Yes/No

Whether reportable : Yes/No