



IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB & HARYANA
AT CHANDIGARH

202

CRM-M-613-2024 (O&M)
Date of decision: 09.05.2024

Ramanjit Singh alias Sodhi
....Petitioner

Versus

State of Punjab
...Respondent

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE AMAN CHAUDHARY

Present : Mr. Amit Arora, Advocate for the petitioner

Mr. Manipal Singh Atwal, DAG Punjab

AMAN CHAUDHARY. J. (ORAL)

1. Prayer in the present petition filed under Section 439 Cr.P.C. is for grant of regular bail to the petitioner in FIR No.400 dated 22.10.2022, registered under Sections 21(c), 25 and 27 of NDPS Act, at Police Station Goindwal Sahib, District Tarn Taran.
2. Learned counsel contends that the petitioner is in custody for 1 year and more than 6 months. He has been falsely implicated. The recovery allegedly effected from the dashboard of the car, which was driven by Gurbinder Singh alias Gobind, while the petitioner was a co-passenger, was marginally above the non-commercial quantity, it being 274 grams, including the weight of the polythene. The aforesaid co-accused has been granted bail by this Court vide order dated 26.07.2023, Annexure P-1, after being in custody for more than 9 months. There is non-compliance of mandatory provisions of Sections 50 and 52 of NDPS Act. Charges stand framed on 17.05.2023 and out of 14 prosecution witnesses, 3 have been examined. The petitioner was convicted in one case and awarded sentence of



one month, wherein a small quantity of 1.28 grams of Alprazolam was recovered from him and one case is pending, wherein he is on bail. In this regard, reliance is placed on the judgment of Hon'ble The Supreme Court in **Maulana Mohd. Amir Rashadi vs. State of U.P. and others**, 2012(2) SCC 382.

3. Custody certificate dated 08.05.2024, filed by learned State counsel is taken on record, as per which, the petitioner is behind bars for 1 year, 6 months and 9 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, co-accused having been enlarged on bail and petitioner being on bail in another case.

5. Heard.

6. Hon'ble The Supreme Court in the case of **Maulana Mohd. Amir Rashadi** (supra) had held that, "As observed by the High Court, merely on the basis of criminal antecedents, the claim of the second respondent cannot be rejected. In other words, it is the duty of the Court to find out the role of the accused in the case in which he has been charged and other circumstances such as possibility of fleeing away from the jurisdiction of the Court etc."

7. 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. 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.

8. Considering the facts and circumstances of the case, in particular that the petitioner is in custody for the last 1 year, 6 months and 9 days; on bail in another case; co-accused having been granted bail; charges were framed on 17.05.2023 and out of 14 witnesses, 3 have 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.

9. 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.

10. 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.

11. 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.

(AMAN CHAUDHARY)
JUDGE

09.05.2024
M.Kamra

Whether speaking/reasoned : Yes / No
Whether reportable : Yes / No