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IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA AT
CHANDIGARH

201

CRM-M No.7924 of 2024 (O&M)
Date of decision: 05.11.2024

Lovepreet Singh @ Love

....Petitioner

Versus

State of Punjab

....Respondent

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE NAMIT KUMAR

Present: Mr. G.S. Ghuman, Advocate
with Mr. Atul Kumar, Advocate
for the petitioner.

Mr. Rajesh Sehgal, Addl. A.G., Punjab.

NAMIT KUMAR J. (Oral)

CRM-42593-2024

Prayer in the instant application filed under Section 528 of
BNSS, 2023 is for placing on record the documents (Annexures A-1
and A-2).

Allowed as prayed for subject to all just exceptions.

CRM-M No.7924 of 2024

1. Prayer in this third petition filed under Section 439 Cr.P.C.,
is for grant of regular bail to the petitioner in FIR No.160 dated
19.08.2022, registered under Sections 21, 29, 61, 85 of the Narcotic
Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985 (in short 'the NDPS
Act') at Police Station Beas, District Amritsar (Rural).
2. As per prosecution case, the allegations levelled in the FIR
are that SI Balwinder Singh, along with other police officials, was on

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routine patrolling duty. When he reached the bridge near Rohi, a person was seen walking from the direction of village Beas. On seeing the police party, he tried to turn back. He was signalled to stop and was subsequently apprehended by the police. He identified himself as Lovepreet Singh Lakha (petitioner herein). Upon inspection, 262 grams of Heroin, wrapped in a transparent polythene, was found from the right pocket of his pant. Thereafter, the accused was arrested and the FIR was registered.

3. Learned counsel for the petitioner *inter alia* contends that the petitioner is innocent and has been falsely implicated in the present case. He further submits that the petitioner is in custody for the last 02 years, 02 months and 13 days. Learned counsel for the petitioner further submits that the investigation in the present case is complete, challan stands presented; charges have been framed and out of total 08 prosecution witnesses, only 06 PWs have been examined so far and the trial is likely to take considerable time to conclude, therefore, no fruitful purpose would be served by detaining the petitioner behind the bars.

4. Learned counsel for the petitioner has referred to a judgment of the Hon'ble Supreme Court passed in "***Satender Kumar Antil Vs. Central Bureau of Investigation and another***", 2022(10) SCC 51, to contend that the Hon'ble Supreme Court has discussed the serious issue with regard to repeated adjournments and its effect upon the Right to Life under Article 21 of the Constitution of India. He has

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also referred to a latest judgment of the Hon'ble Supreme Court passed in *Criminal Appeal No.943 of 2023 titled as "Mohd. Muslim @ Hussain Vs. State (NCT of Delhi)"* decided on 28.03.2023 to contend that when there is a long delay in the trial and especially when it is not the fault of the accused and in that situation even the effect of Section 37 of the NDPS Act will be diluted in the given facts and circumstances of each and every case.

5. Per contra, learned State Counsel, has opposed the prayer for grant of regular bail to the petitioner on the ground that the petitioner was found in conscious possession of 262 grams of Heroin, which is commercial quantity and apart from the present FIR, he is involved in three more cases i.e. FIR No.632 dated 12.12.2022, registered under Sections 42 and 52-A of the Prisons Act at Police Station Islamabad, District Amritsar and FIR No.147 dated 16.04.2023 registered under Sections 42 and 52-A of the Prisons Act at Police Station Islamabad, District Amritsar and FIR No.342 dated 18.09.2018, registered under Sections 379, 511, 34 IPC at Police Station Civil Lines, District Amritsar, therefore, he does not deserve the concession of regular bail. However, he could not refute that out of total 08 prosecution witnesses, only 06 PWs have been examined till date; the next date of hearing, fixed before the trial Court is 13.11.2024; the petitioner is in custody for the last 02 years, 02 months and 13 days and the trial may take a considerable time to conclude.

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6. In reply, learned counsel for the petitioner submits that in both the aforementioned FIRs i.e. FIR No.632 dated 12.12.2022 and FIR No.147 dated 16.04.2023, the petitioner confessed his guilt. A fine has been imposed upon him, which has already been deposited by the petitioner in both the FIRs. Whereas in FIR No.342 dated 18.09.2018, the petitioner has already undergone the awarded sentence on 28.07.2023. He further submits that the recovery effected from the petitioner is marginally higher than the commercial quantity. He further submits that the alleged recovery of commercial quantity effected from the petitioner includes the weight of a polythene bag, and when it is excluded, the recovered contraband would fall under the category of 'non-commercial.'

7. I have heard learned counsel for the parties and perused the record.

8. In view of the custody period undergone by the petitioner, it is apposite to refer to a few judgments of Hon’ble Supreme Court in this regard wherein the Hon’ble Supreme Court has granted the concession of bail solely on ground of long custody :-

Case Number	Date of Decision	Title of case	Period which the accused had undergone when granted bail by Hon'ble Supreme Court
Criminal Appeal No.245/2020	07.02.2020	Chitta Biswas @ Subhas Vs. the State of West Bengal	1 year and 7 months
Criminal Appeal No.668/2020	12.10.2020	Amit Singh Moni Vs. State of Himachal Pradesh	2 years and 7 months

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Special Leave to Appeal (Crl.) No.5187 of 2021	10.11.2021	Kulwant Singh Vs. The State of Punjab	More than 2 years
Special Leave to Appeal (Crl.) No.5769/2022	01.08.2022	Nitish Adhikary @ Bapan Vs. the State of West Bengal	1 year and 7 months
Special Leave to Appeal (Crl.) No.4173 of 2022	04.08.2022	Shariful Islam @ Sarif Vs. the State of West Bengal	1 year and 6 months
Criminal Appeal No.1169 of 2022	05.08.2022	Gopal Krishna Patra @ Gopalrusma Vs. Union of India	2 years 1 month and 17 days
Special Leave to Appeal (Crl.) No.5530-2022	22.08.2022	Mohammad Salman Hanif Shaikh Vs. the State of Gurjarat	About 2 years
Special Leave to Appeal (Crl.) No.7840 of 2022	31.10.2022	Shahjad Vs. The State of Uttar Pradesh	About 2 years

9. Without commenting anything on merits of the case and considering the fact that the petitioner is in custody for the last 02 years, 02 months and 13 days; investigation is complete; challan stands presented; charges have been framed and out of 08 PWs, only 06 PWs have been examined so far and the trial is likely to take considerable time to conclude, the present petition is allowed and the petitioner is directed to be released on regular bail subject to his furnishing bail/surety bonds to the satisfaction of the trial Court/Illaq Magistrate/Duty Magistrate concerned. However, in addition to conditions that may be imposed by the trial Court/Duty Magistrate concerned, the petitioner shall remain bound by the following conditions:-

(i) The petitioner shall not directly or indirectly make any inducement, threat or promise to any person acquainted with the facts of the case, so as to dissuade him

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to disclose such facts to the Court or to any other authority.

(ii) The petitioner shall remain present before the Court on the dates fixed for hearing of the case.

(iii) The petitioner shall not absent himself from the Court proceedings except on the prior permission of the Court concerned.

(iv) The petitioner shall surrender his passport, if any, (if already not surrendered), and in case he is not holder of the same, he shall swear an affidavit to that effect.

(v) In case, the petitioner involves in any other criminal activity, during the pendency of the trial, it shall be viewed seriously and the prosecution shall be at liberty to move a petition for cancellation of bail granted to him.

(vi) The concerned Court may insist on two heavy local sureties and may also impose any other condition, in accordance with law, while accepting the bail bonds and surety bonds of the petitioner.

10. In case of breach of any of the aforesaid conditions and those which may be imposed by the trial Court, the prosecution shall be at liberty to move an application for cancellation of bail of the petitioner.

(NAMIT KUMAR)
JUDGE

05.11.2024
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Whether speaking/reasoned:	Yes/No
Whether reportable:	Yes/No