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IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA
AT CHANDIGARH

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Date of Decision : May 13, 2024

GOVIND RAI @ GOPI -PETITIONER

V/S

STATE OF PUNJAB -RESPONDENT

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE KULDEEP TIWARI

Present: Mr. Angad Parmar, Advocate
for the petitioner.

Mr. Pardeep Bajaj, D.A.G., Punjab.

Mr. Ankur Bansal, Advocate
for the complainant.

KULDEEP TIWARI, J. (ORAL)

1. Through the instant petition, the petitioner craves for indulgence of this Court for him being enlarged on regular bail, in case FIR No.151 dated 18.07.2023, under Sections 452, 323, 324, 326, 307, 379-B, 427 of the IPC, and, Section 27 of the Arms Act (Sections 450, 336, 201 of the IPC, and, Section 25 of the Arms Act added subsequently), registered at P.S. Navi Baradari, District Police Commissionerate Jalandhar.

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST THE PETITIONER

2. The present FIR derives its genesis from the statement of one Sharandeep Singh (hereinafter referred to as the ‘complainant’). Succinctly stated, the allegations levelled against the petitioner are that, he along with his co-accused inflicted injuries to the complainant and his parents and also committed snatching. The relevant extract of the complainant’s statement, as narrated in paragraph No.2 of the order dated 13.02.2024, wherethrough peti-



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tioner's second bail application has been dismissed by the learned Additional Sessions Judge concerned, is reproduced hereinafter:-

"...present case was registered on the statement of Sharandeep Singh with the allegations that he was Cable Network Operator. On 17.07.2023 at about 11:30 pm, when he was standing outside his house, one white Swift Car came there and two young boys namely Rahul and Gopi (applicant/accused) alighted from the same. Another e-rickshaw also came there and Rohan alias Kanna and one driver alighted from same. All these four persons Rahul, Gopi (accused/applicant) and Rohan and another unknown boy attacked him. Rohan, Gopi and Rahul were stating that they had demanded money from him, but he had not given the same. Rohan was armed with sharp edged object and he gave blow with the same on the back of his head. Gopi (accused/applicant) gave another sharp edged weapon blow on his head. Rahul scuffled with him. Blood was oozing out of head. Thereupon the other unknown person raised lalkara that he be taught a lesson for not giving money to them. He raised hue and cry and ran towards his house. Thereupon, Gopi, Rohan and Rahul chased him. On hearing raula, his father Daljit Singh and mother Sukhwinder Kaur came out of the house to save him, but said assailants used derogatory language against them and gave injuries on their head. He was having 32 bore licensed revolver, which he had kept in his house. In order to save himself and to save life of his parents, he took out said gun from his house and fired shots in air. Thereupon said assailants snatched his revolver and also fired towards him with an intention to kill him, but he along-with his parents went inside his house to save themselves. When the assailants were giving injuries to his parents, they snatched gold chain from the neck of his mother and Gopi and Rahul also snatched away Rs.70,000/- which were lying in the bed. Entire occurrence was recorded in CCTV Cameras installed on the gate of his house and in the street..."

SUBMISSIONS OF LEARNED COUNSEL FOR THE PETITIONER

3. The learned counsel for the petitioner, in his asking for the hereinabove extracted relief, has made the following submissions:-



- (i) *Although the present FIR embodies specific allegations against the petitioner that he caused injury(ies) to the complainant, which was declared “dangerous to life”, however, the veracity of such allegations is yet to be ascertained and established;*
- (ii) *Although the petitioner is stated to be involved in a couple of other cases also, however, in majority of those cases, he has earned acquittal;*
- (iii) *Petitioner has undergone incarceration of approx. 10 months;*
- (iv) *Investigation stands completed, whereupon, Final Report was presented on 13.10.2023 and charges were framed on 02.02.2024;*
- (v) *the trial is not likely to conclude anytime soon, as out of total 29 prosecution witnesses, none has yet been examined, therefore, keeping the petitioner behinds the bars, without him being proved guilty, would serve no gainful purpose;*

SUBMISSIONS OF THE LEARNED STATE COUNSEL, AND,
LEARNED COUNSEL FOR THE COMPLAINANT

4. *Per contra*, the learned State counsel, who is assisted by the learned counsel for the complainant, has vehemently opposed the grant of bail to the petitioner, on the ground that, the petitioner has not only caused injuries to the complainant, but he intruded into the complainant’s house and caused injuries to his parents also. Moreover, apart from inflicting injuries, the petitioner, who is in fact running a racket of extortion, has committed snatching also in the complainant’s house.

5. The learned State counsel has also placed on record the custody certificate of the petitioner, as issued by the Superintendent, Central Jail, Kapurthala. Moreover, on instructions imparted to him by A.S.I. Balwinder



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Singh, he has verified that none out of the total 29 prosecution witnesses has yet been examined.

ANALYSIS

6. Before embarking upon the process of evaluating the arguments addressed by the learned counsels for the parties and penning down any opinion upon the instant petition, it is deemed imperative to capture an overview of some significant legal propositions.

7. “*Bail is the Rule and Jail is an Exception*”. This basic principle of criminal jurisprudence was laid down by the Hon’ble Supreme Court, way back in 1978, in its landmark judgment titled “*State of Rajasthan V. Balchand alias Baliay*”, 1977 AIR 2447, 1978 SCR (1) 535. This principle finds its roots in one of the most distinguished fundamental rights, as enshrined in Article 21 of the Constitution of India. Though the underlying objective behind detention of a person is to ensure easy availability of an accused for trial, without any inconvenience, however, in case the presence of an accused can be secured otherwise, then detention is not compulsory.

8. The right to a speedy trial is one of the rights of a detained person. However, while deciding application for regular bail, the Courts shall also take into consideration the fundamental precept of criminal jurisprudence, which is “the presumption of innocence”, besides the gravity of offence(s) involved.

9. In “*Gurbaksh Singh Sibbia v. State of Punjab*”, (1980) 2 SCC 565 at 586-588, the purpose of granting bail is set out by the Hon’ble Supreme Court with great felicity as follows:-

“27. It is not necessary to refer to decisions which deal with the right to ordinary bail because that right does not furnish an exact



parallel to the right to anticipatory bail. It is, however, interesting that as long back as in 1924 it was held by the High Court of Calcutta in Nagendra v. King Emperor, AIR 1924 Calcutta 476 (479, 480) that the object of bail is to secure the attendance of the accused at the trial, that the proper test to be applied in the solution of the question whether bail should be granted or refused is whether it is probable that the party will appear to take his trial and that it is indisputable that bail is not to be withheld as a punishment. In two other cases which, significantly, are the 'Meerut Conspiracy cases observations are to be found regarding the right to bail which deserve a special mention. In K.N. Joglekar v. Emperor, AIR 1931 Allahabad 504 (SB) it was observed, while dealing with Section 498 which corresponds to the present Section 439 of the Code, that it conferred upon the Sessions Judge or the High Court wide powers to grant bail which were not handicapped by the restrictions in the preceding Section 497 which corresponds to the present Section 437. It was observed by the Court that there was no hard and fast rule and no inflexible principle governing the exercise of the discretion conferred by Section 498 and that the only principle which was established was that the discretion should be exercised judiciously. In Emperor v. H.L. Hutchinson, AIR 1931 Allahabad 356 at p. 358 it was said that it was very unwise to make an attempt to lay down any particular rules which bind the High Court, having regard to the fact that the legislature itself left the discretion of the Court unfettered. According to the High Court, the variety of cases that may arise from time to time cannot be safely classified and it is dangerous to make an attempt to classify the cases and to say that in particular classes a bail may be granted but not in other classes. It was observed that the principle to be deduced from the various sections in the Criminal Procedure Code was that grant of bail is the rule and refusal is the exception. An accused person who enjoys freedom is in a much better position to look after his case and to properly defend himself than if he were in custody. As a presumably innocent person he is therefore entitled to freedom and every opportunity to look after his own case. A presumably innocent person must have his freedom to enable him to establish his innocence.

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29. In *Gurcharan Singh v. State (Delhi Admn.)* (1978) 1 SCC 118 it was observed by Goswami, J., who spoke for the Court, that "there cannot be an inexorable formula in the matter of granting bail. The facts and circumstances of each case will govern the exercise of judicial discretion in granting or cancelling bail".

30. In *American Jurisprudence* (2d, Vol. 8, page 806, para 39) it is stated :

"Where the granting of bail lies within the discretion of the court, the granting or denial is regulated, to a large extent, by the facts and circumstances of each particular case. Since the object of the detention or imprisonment of the accused is to secure his appearance and submission to the jurisdiction and the judgment of the court, the primary inquiry is whether a recognizance or bond would effect that end."

It is thus clear that the question whether to grant bail or not depends for its answer upon a variety of circumstances, the cumulative effect of which must enter into the judicial verdict. Any one single circumstance cannot be treated as of universal validity or as necessarily justifying the grant or refusal of bail."

10. Also, in ***"Gudikanti Narasimhulu and others Versus Public Prosecutor, High Court of Andhra Pradesh"***, 1978 AIR (Supreme Court) 429, the Hon'ble Supreme Court, speaking through Krishna Iyer, J., has enunciated the principles of bail thus :

"9. Thus the legal principle and practice validate the court considering the likelihood of the applicant interfering with witnesses for the prosecution or otherwise polluting the process of justice. It is not only traditional but rational, in this context, to enquire into the antecedents of a man who is applying for bail to find whether he has a bad record-particularly a record which suggests that he is likely to commit serious offences while on bail. In regard to habitual, it is part of criminological history that a thoughtless bail order has enabled the bailee to exploit the opportunity to inflict further crimes on the member of society. Bail discretion, on the basis of evidence about the criminal record of a defendant, is therefore not an exercise in irrelevance."



10. *The significance and sweep of Article 21 make the deprivation of liberty a matter of grave concern and permissible only when the law authorising it is reasonable, even-handed and geared to the goals of community good and State necessity spelt out in Article 19. Indeed, the considerations I have set out as criteria are germane to the constitutional proposition I have deduced. Reasonableness postulates intelligent care and predicates that deprivation of freedom by refusal of bail is not for punitive purpose but for the bi-focal interests of justice - to the individual involved and society affected.*

11. *We must weight the contrary factors to answer the test the reasonableness, subject to the need for securing the presence of the bail applicant. It makes sense to assume that a man on bail has a better chance to prepare or present his case than one remanded in custody. And if public justice is to be promoted, mechanical detention should be demoted. In the United States, which has a constitutional perspective close to ours, the function of bail is limited, 'community roots' of the applicant are stressed and, after the Vera Foundation's Manhattan Bail Project, monetary suretyship is losing ground. The considerable public expense in keeping in custody where no danger of disappearance or disturbance can arise, is not a negligible consideration. Equally important is the deplorable condition, verging on the inhuman, of our sub-jails, that the unrewarding cruelty and expensive custody of avoidable incarceration makes refusal of bail unreasonable and a policy favouring release justly sensible.*

12. *A few other weighty factors deserve reference. All deprivation of liberty is validated by social defence and individual correction along an anti-criminal direction. Public justice is central to the whole scheme of bail law. Fleeing justice must be forbidden but punitive harshness should be minimised. Restorative devices to redeem the man, even through community service, meditative drill, study classes or other resources should be innovated, and playing foul with public peace by tampering with evidence, intimidating witnesses or committing offences while on judicially sanctioned 'free enterprise', should be provided against. No seeker of justice shall play confidence tricks on the court or community. Thus, conditions may be hung around bail orders, not to cripple but to protect. Such is the holistic jurisdiction and humanistic orientation invoked by the judi-*



cial discretion correlated to the values of our Constitution.

13. Viewed from this perspective, we gain a better insight into the rules of the game. When a person, charged with a grave offence, has been acquitted at a stage, has the intermediate acquittal pertinence to a bail plea when the appeal before this Court pends? Yes, it has. The panic which might prompt the accused to jump the gauntlet of justice is less, having enjoyed the confidence of the court's verdict once. Concurrent holdings of guilt have the opposite effect. Again, the ground for denial of provisional release becomes weaker when the fact stares us in the face that a fair finding if that be so - of innocence has been recorded by one court. It may not be conclusive, for the judgment of acquittal may be ex facie wrong, the likelihood of desperate reprisal, if enlarged, may be a deterrent and his own safety may be more in prison than in the vengeful village where feuds have provoked the violent offence. It depends. Antecedents of the man and socio-geographical circumstances have a bearing only from this angle. Police exaggerations of prospective misconduct of the accused, if enlarged, must be soberly sized up lest danger of excesses and injustice creep subtly into the discretionary curial technique. Bad record and policy prediction of criminal prospects to invalidate the bail plea are admissible in principle but shall not stampede the court into a complacent refusal."

11. Be that as it may, considering the hereinabove made submissions, especially the fact that: (i) as per custody certificate, the petitioner has suffered incarceration of approx. 10 months; (ii) trial is at its initial stage and is not likely to conclude anytime soon, as out of total 29 prosecution witnesses, none has yet been examined, therefore, subjecting the petitioner to prolonged incarceration would serve no fruitful purpose; (iii) the victim(s)/injured has reportedly recovered from injuries and has not suffered any permanent disability; this Court deems it appropriate to grant the concession of regular bail to the petitioner. Therefore, without commenting upon the merits and circumstances of the present case, the



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present petition is **allowed**. The petitioner is ordered to be released on bail on furnishing of bail bond and surety bond to the satisfaction of concerned Chief Judicial Magistrate/trial Court/Duty Magistrate.

12. However, anything observed here-in-above shall have no effect on the merits of the case and is meant for deciding the present petition only.

May 13, 2024
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(KULDEEP TIWARI)
JUDGE

Whether speaking/reasoned	:	Yes/No
Whether Reportable	:	Yes/No