

222 IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA
AT CHANDIGARH

CRM-M-21191-2024
Decided on: 03.07.2024

Shubeg Singh ...Petitioner

Versus

State of Punjab ...Respondent

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE ANOOP CHITKARA

Present: Mr. Kuldip Singh, Advocate
for the petitioner.

Ms. Swati Batra, DAG, Punjab.

ANOOP CHITKARA, J.

FIR No.	Dated	Police Station	Sections
35	29.03.2022	City Jalalabad, District Fazilka	379-B, 384, 389, 120-B IPC

1. The petitioner incarcerated upon his arrest in the FIR captioned above, has come up before this Court under Section 439 CrPC seeking bail.
2. As per para 21 of the petition, the petitioner is not involved in any other case.
3. Petitioner's counsel prays for bail by imposing any stringent conditions and states that they would have no objection to the conditions, i.e., surrender of weapons and is also voluntarily agreeable to the condition that till the conclusion of the trial, the petitioner shall keep only one mobile number, which is mentioned in AADHAR card, if any, and within fifteen days undertakes to disconnect all other mobile numbers. The petitioner contends that the further pre-trial incarceration would cause an irreversible injustice to the petitioner and family.
4. The State opposes the bail.

REASONING:

5. Facts of the case are being taken from the reply dated 03.07.2024, which reads as



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under:-

"That the present FIR was registered when complainant Bal Ram son of Makhan Lal moved a written complaint to SHO P.S.City, Jalalabad alleging that 23.03.2022 at 4/5 PM, he was going towards Jalalabad riding on motor cycle and when he reached near the Toll Barrier of village Mahmu Joyia, two females signaled him to stop and sought a lift and on their insistence, he accommodated them by giving lift on his motor cycle. When he reached near police station Sadar, Jalalabad, the old Lady requested him to stop the motor cycle. After alighting from the motorcycle, both of them caught hold of complainant from his collar and started dragging him. As per conspiracy, 4-5 male and 4-5 other females also joined them. They snatched his mobile phone, his wallet containing 4000/5000 rupees cash, ATM and debit card as well as his blank signed cheques lying in the wallet. Thereafter, all the said persons forcibly took him to village Kamre wala. On the way, they used his mobile phone to make calls on their own phones. They also clicked his photographs and made video clips. Then all of them apprised him that he has been trapped in their conspiracy and demanded Rs.5 lacs from him under the threat. otherwise they would involve him in a sex crime. They also obtained his signatures upon blank papers. Ultimately, all the accused demanded Rs.1 lakh by threatening that otherwise, they would level rape charges. Under threat, the complainant arranged Rs.15,000/- from his commission agent and handed it over to the accused. He also took back his mobile phone, but his documents were retained to be returned after paying the remaining money. Out of fear and in order to save his reputation, he did anybody, not but disclose this the fact with above said accused through different mobile numbers started blackmailing him under threat to level rape charges against him. He mentioned some of the mobile numbers in his complaint.

b) That as per said statement, initially, FIR No.35 dated 29.03.2022 under sections 379B, 384, 389, 120-B IPC was registered against Amro Bai wife of Bagicha Singh resident of village Hazara Singh Wala District Ferozepur and Mukhtiar singh son of Gajjan singh resident of village Rau Ke district Ferozepur and two unidentified women and two unidentified men at police station City, Jalalabad.

c) That after registration of the present FIR, during the course of investigations, two of the accused namely Mukhtiar Singh and Amro Bai were rounded up on 29.03.2022 and they categorically confessed that they had looted the complainant under threat of leveling rape charges. Some of the fleece money i.e. Rs.3000/- and mobile phone make Samsung was also recovered from them as per their disclosure statement."

6. As per paragraph 13 of the bail petition, the petitioner is in custody since 21.01.2024. Given the penal provisions invoked viz-a-viz pre-trial custody, coupled with the prima facie analysis of the nature of allegations, and the other factors peculiar to this case and also that petitioner is first offender, there would be no justifiability for further pre-trial incarceration at this stage, subject to the compliance of terms and conditions mentioned in this order.



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7. In *Gurbaksh Singh Sibbia v State of Punjab*, 1980 (2) SCC 565, (Para 30), a Constitutional Bench of Supreme Court held that the bail decision must enter the cumulative effect of the variety of circumstances justifying the grant or refusal of bail. In *Kalyan Chandra Sarkar v Rajesh Ranjan @ Pappu Yadav*, 2005 (2) SCC 42, (Para 18) a three-member Bench of Supreme Court held that the persons accused of non-bailable offences are entitled to bail if the Court concerned concludes that the prosecution has failed to establish a prima facie case against him, or despite the existence of a prima facie case, the Court records reasons for its satisfaction for the need to release such person on bail, in the given fact situations. The rejection of bail does not preclude filing a subsequent application. The courts can release on bail, provided the circumstances then prevailing require, and a change in the fact situation. In *State of Rajasthan v Balchand*, AIR 1977 SC 2447, (Para 2 & 3), Supreme Court noticeably illustrated that the basic rule might perhaps be tersely put as bail, not jail, except where there are circumstances suggestive of fleeing from justice or thwarting the course of justice or creating other troubles in the shape of repeating offences or intimidating witnesses and the like by the petitioner who seeks enlargement on bail from the Court. It is true that the gravity of the offence involved is likely to induce the petitioner to avoid the course of justice and must weigh when considering the question of jail. So also, the heinousness of the crime. In *Gudikanti Narasimhulu v Public Prosecutor*, (1978) 1 SCC 240, (Para 16), Supreme Court held that the delicate light of the law favors release unless countered by the negative criteria necessitating that course. In *Prahlad Singh Bhati v NCT, Delhi*, (2001) 4 SCC 280, Supreme Court highlighted one of the factors for bail to be the public or the State's immense interest and similar other considerations. In *Dataram Singh v State of Uttar Pradesh*, **2018:INSC:107 [Para 7]**, (2018) 3 SCC 22, (Para 6), Supreme Court held that the grant or refusal of bail is entirely within the discretion of the judge hearing the matter and though that discretion is unfettered, it must be exercised judiciously, compassionately, and in a humane manner. Also, conditions for the grant of bail ought not to be so strict as to be incapable of compliance, thereby making the grant of bail illusory.

8. The possibility of the accused influencing the investigation, tampering with evidence, intimidating witnesses, and the likelihood of fleeing justice, can be taken care of by imposing elaborative and stringent conditions. In *Sushila Aggarwal v. State (NCT of Delhi)*, **2020:INSC:106 [Para 92]**, (2020) 5 SCC 1, Para 92, the Constitutional Bench held that unusually, subject to the evidence produced, the Courts can impose restrictive conditions.



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9. Without commenting on the case's merits, in the facts and circumstances peculiar to this case, and for the reasons mentioned above, the petitioner makes a case for bail, subject to the following terms and conditions, which shall be over and above and irrespective of the contents of the form of bail bonds in chapter XXXIII of CrPC, 1973.

10. In Madhu Tanwar and Anr. v. State of Punjab, **2023:PHHC:077618 [Para 10, 21]**, CRM-M-27097-2023, decided on 29-05-2023, this court observed,

[10] The exponential growth in technology and artificial intelligence has transformed identification techniques remarkably. Voice, gait, and facial recognition are incredibly sophisticated and pervasive. Impersonation, as we know it traditionally, has virtually become impossible. Thus, the remedy lies that whenever a judge or an officer believes that the accused might be a flight risk or has a history of fleeing from justice, then in such cases, appropriate conditions can be inserted that all the expenditure that shall be incurred to trace them, shall be recovered from such person, and the State shall have a lien over their assets to make good the loss.

[21] In this era when the knowledge revolution has just begun, to keep pace with exponential and unimaginable changes the technology has brought to human lives, it is only fitting that the dependence of the accused on surety is minimized by giving alternative options. Furthermore, there should be no insistence to provide permanent addresses when people either do not have permanent abodes or intend to re-locate.

11. Given above, provided the petitioner is not required in any other case, the petitioner shall be released on bail in the FIR captioned above, in the following terms:

(a). Petitioner to furnish personal bond of Rs. Ten thousand (INR 10,000/-); AND

(b) To give one surety of Rs. Twenty-five thousand (INR 25,000/-), to the satisfaction of the concerned court, and in case of non-availability, to any nearest Ilaqa Magistrate/duty Magistrate. Before accepting the surety, the concerned officer/court must satisfy that if the accused fails to appear in court, then such surety can produce the accused before the court.

OR

(b). Petitioner to hand over to the concerned court a fixed deposit for Rs. Ten thousand only (INR 10,000/-), with the clause of automatic renewal of the principal and the interest reverting to the linked account, made in favor of the 'Chief Judicial Magistrate' of the concerned district, or

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blocking the aforesaid amount in favour of the concerned ‘Chief Judicial Magistrate’. Said fixed deposit or blocking funds can be from any of the banks where the stake of the State is more than 50% or from any of the well-established and stable private sector banks. In case the bankers are not willing to make a Fixed Deposit in such eventuality it shall be permissible for the petitioner to prepare an account payee demand draft favouring concerned Chief Judicial Magistrate for the similar amount.

(c). Such court shall have a lien over the funds until the case's closure or discharged by substitution, or up to the expiry of the period mentioned under S. 437-A CrPC, 1973, and at that stage, subject to the proceedings under S. 446 CrPC, the entire amount of fixed deposit, less taxes if any, shall be endorsed/returned to the depositor.

(d). The petitioner is to also execute a bond for attendance in the concerned court(s) as and when asked to do so. The presentation of the personal bond shall be deemed acceptance of the declarations made in the bail petition and all other stipulations, terms, and conditions of section 438(2) of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973, and of this bail order.

(e). While furnishing personal bond, the petitioner shall mention the following personal identification details:

1.	AADHAR number	
2.	Passport number, (If available), when the attesting officer/court thinks appropriate or considers the accused as a flight risk.	
3.	Mobile number (If available)	
4.	E-Mail id (If available)	

12. The petitioner shall not influence, browbeat, pressurize, make any inducement, threat, or promise, directly or indirectly, to the witnesses, the police officials, or any other person acquainted with the facts and the circumstances of the case, to dissuade them from disclosing such facts to the police, or the court, or to tamper with the evidence.

13. Petitioner to comply with their undertaking made in the bail petition, made before this court through counsel as reflected at the beginning of this order. If the petitioner fails to comply with any of such undertakings, then on this ground alone, the



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bail might be canceled, and the victim/complainant may file any such application for the cancellation of bail, and the State shall file the said application.

14. The petitioner is directed not to keep more than one prepaid SIM, i.e., one pre-paid mobile phone number, till the conclusion of the trial; however, this restriction is only on prepaid SIMs [mobile numbers] and not on post-paid connections or landline numbers. The petitioner must comply with this condition within fifteen days of release from prison. The concerned DySP shall also direct all the telecom service providers to deactivate all prepaid SIM cards and prepaid mobile numbers issued to the petitioner, except the one that is mentioned as the primary number/ default number linked with the AADHAAR card and further that till the no objection from the concerned SHO, the mobile service providers shall not issue second pre-paid SIM/ mobile number in the petitioner's name. Since, as on date, in India, there are only four prominent mobile service providers, namely BSNL, Airtel, Vodafone-Idea, and Reliance Jio, any other telecom service provider are directed to comply with the directions of the concerned Superintendent of Police/Commissioner of Police, issued in this regard and disable all prepaid mobile phone numbers issued in the name of the petitioner, except the main number/default number linked with AADHAR, by taking such information from the petitioner's AADHAR details or any other source, for which they shall be legally entitled by this order. This condition shall continue till the completion of the trial or closure of the case, whichever is earlier. In Vernon v. The State of Maharashtra, 2023 INSC 655, [para 45], while granting bail under Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 2002, Supreme Court had directed imposition of the similar condition, which reads as follows, "(d) Both the appellants shall use only one Mobile Phone each, during the time they remain on bail and shall inform the Investigating Officer of the NIA, their respective mobile numbers."

15. Given the background of allegations against the petitioner, it becomes paramount to protect the drug detection squad, their family members, as well as the members of society, and incapacitating the accused would be one of the primary options until the filing of the closure report or discharge, or acquittal. Consequently, it would be appropriate to restrict the possession of firearm(s). [This restriction is being imposed based on the preponderance of evidence of probability and not of evidence of certainty, i.e., beyond reasonable doubt; and as such, it is not to be construed as an intermediate sanction]. Given the nature of the allegations and the other circumstances peculiar to this case, the petitioner shall surrender all weapons, firearms, ammunition, if any, along with the arms license to the concerned authority within fifteen days from release from



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prison and inform the Investigator about the compliance. However, subject to the Indian Arms Act, 1959, the petitioner shall be entitled to renew and take it back in case of acquittal in this case, provided otherwise permissible in the concerned rules. Restricting firearms would instill confidence in the victim(s), their families, and society; it would also restrain the accused from influencing the witnesses and repeating the offence.

16. During the trial's pendency, if the petitioner repeats or commits any offence where the sentence prescribed is more than seven years or violates any condition as stipulated in this order, it shall always be permissible to the respondent to apply for cancellation of this bail. It shall further be open for any investigating agency to bring it to the notice of the court seized of the subsequent application that the accused was earlier cautioned not to indulge in criminal activities. Otherwise, the bail bonds shall remain in force throughout the trial and after that in Section 437-A of the Cr.P.C., if not canceled due to non-appearance or breach of conditions.

17. The conditions mentioned above imposed by this court are to endeavour that the accused does not repeat the offence and to ensure the safety of the society. In *Mohammed Zubair v. State of NCT of Delhi*, **2022:INSC:735 [Para 28]**, Writ Petition (Criminal) No 279 of 2022, Para 29, decided on July 20, 2022, A Three-Judge bench of Hon'ble Supreme Court holds that "The bail conditions imposed by the Court must not only have a nexus to the purpose that they seek to serve but must also be proportional to the purpose of imposing them. The courts, while imposing bail conditions must balance the liberty of the accused and the necessity of a fair trial. While doing so, conditions that would result in the deprivation of rights and liberties must be eschewed."

18. Any Advocate for the petitioner and the Officer in whose presence the petitioner puts signatures on personal bonds shall explain all conditions of this bail order in any language that the petitioner understands.

19. If the petitioner finds bond amount beyond social and financial reach, it may be brought to the notice of this Court for appropriate reduction. Further, if the petitioner finds bail condition(s) as violating fundamental, human, or other rights, or causing difficulty due to any situation, then for modification of such term(s), the petitioner may file a reasoned application before this Court, and after taking cognizance, even to the Court taking cognizance or the trial Court, as the case may be, and such Court shall also be competent to modify or delete any condition.



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20. This order does not, in any manner, limit or restrict the rights of the Police or the investigating agency from further investigation as per law.

21. In case the Investigator/Officer-In-Charge of the concerned Police Station arraigns another section of any penal offence in this FIR, and if the new section prescribes maximum sentence which is not greater than the sections mentioned above, then this bail order shall be deemed to have also been passed for the newly added section(s). However, suppose the newly inserted sections prescribe a sentence exceeding the maximum sentence prescribed in the sections mentioned above, then, in that case, the Investigator/Officer-In-Charge shall give the petitioner notice of a minimum of seven days providing an opportunity to avail the remedies available in law.

22. Any observation made hereinabove is neither an expression of opinion on the merits of the case nor shall the trial Court advert to these comments.

23. In return for the protection from incarceration, the Court believes that the accused shall also reciprocate through desirable behavior.

24. *There would be no need for a certified copy of this order for furnishing bonds, and any Advocate for the Petitioner can download this order along with case status from the official web page of this Court and attest it to be a true copy. In case the attesting officer wants to verify the authenticity, such an officer can also verify its authenticity and may download and use the downloaded copy for attesting bonds.*

Petition allowed in aforesaid terms. All pending applications, if any, stand disposed.

(ANOOP CHITKARA)
JUDGE

03.07.2024
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Whether speaking/reasoned: Yes
Whether reportable: No.