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IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA
AT CHANDIGARH

CRM-M No.25164 of 2024
Date of decision : 16.7.2024

Gautam Sehgal

.....Petitioner

Versus

State of Punjab

.....Respondent

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE SANDEEP MOUDGIL

Present: Mr. G.S. Madaan, Advocate, for the petitioner
Mr. J.S. Rattu, DAG, Punjab

SANDEEP MOUDGIL, J (ORAL)

This petition under section 439 Cr.P.C. has been filed for grant of regular bail to the petitioner in case FIR No.146 dated 25.8.2023, under Sections 22 of the NDPS Act, 1985, registered at Police Station Sadar, Jalandhar (Annexure P-1).

2. Learned counsel for the petitioner prays for withdrawal of the present petition at this stage. However, he submits that a direction be issued to trial Court to expedite the trial, as after framing of charges on 28.2.2024, out of total 10 prosecution witnesses only 1 has been examined and 3 have been given up so far.
3. Prayer is accepted.
4. Dismissed as withdrawn at this stage.
5. This court cannot shut its eyes to the fact that "Speedy trial" and



"fair trial" to a person accused of a crime are integral part of Article 21. There is, however, qualitative difference between the right to speedy trial and the accused's right of fair trial. Unlike the accused's right of fair trial, deprivation of the right to speedy trial does not *per se* prejudice the accused in defending himself. The right to speedy trial is in its very nature relative. It depends upon diverse circumstances. Each case of delay in conclusion of a criminal trial has to be seen in the facts and circumstances of such case. Mere lapse of several years since the commencement of prosecution by itself may not justify the discontinuance of prosecution or dismissal of indictment. The factors concerning the accused's right to speedy trial have to be weighed vis-a-vis the impact of the crime on society and the confidence of the people in judicial system. Speedy trial secures rights to an accused but it does not preclude the rights of public justice. The nature and gravity of crime, persons involved, social impact and societal needs must be weighed along with the right of the accused to speedy trial and if the balance tilts in favour of the former the long delay in conclusion of criminal trial should not operate against the continuation of prosecution and if the right of the accused in the facts and circumstances of the case and exigencies of situation tilts the balance in his favour, the prosecution may be brought to an end. These principles must apply as well when the Appellate Court is confronted with the question whether or not retrial of an accused should be ordered."

6. Further reliance can be placed upon the dictum of Apex court in **‘Anokhilal v. State of Madhya Pradesh, CRA-62-63 of 2014 SC’**, wherein it has been held that “Expeditious disposal is undoubtedly

required in criminal matters and that would naturally be part of guarantee of fair trial. However, the attempts to expedite the process should not be at the expense of the basic elements of fairness and the opportunity to the accused, on which postulates, the entire criminal administration of justice is founded. In the pursuit for expeditious disposal, the cause of justice must never be allowed to suffer or be sacrificed. What is paramount is the cause of justice and keeping the basic ingredients which secure that as a core idea and ideal, the process may be expedited, but fast tracking of process must never ever result in burying the cause of justice”.

7. In view of the discussions made hereinabove this court deems it appropriate to direct the trial court to make an endeavour to conclude the trial expeditiously preferably within a period of 3 months from the next date of hering.

(SANDEEP MOUDGIL)
JUDGE

16.7.2024
Ashwani

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