



CRM-M-26818-2024

-1-

IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA
AT CHANDIGARH

201+202

Date of Decision: 12.06.2024

1. CRM-M-26818-2024

Labhi Singh @ Lavi

..... Petitioner

Versus

State of Punjab

..... Respondent

2. CRM-M-27040-2024

Gurkamal Singh @ Illu

..... Petitioner

Versus

State of Punjab

..... Respondent

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE KULDEEP TIWARI

Present: Mr. Puran Singh Hundal, Sr. Advocate with
Mr. Gursahib Singh Hundal, Advocate and
Mr. Ankush Chandan, Advocate
for the petitioner (in CRM-M-26818-2024).

Mr. Liaqat Ali, Advocate and
Mr. G.S. Ghuman, Advocate
for the petitioner (in CRM-M-27040-2024).

Mr. Pardeep Bajaj, DAG, Punjab.

KULDEEP TIWARI, J (ORAL)

1. Vide this common order, this Court shall dispose of two petitions, i.e. CRM-M-26818-2024 and CRM-M-27040-2024, wherein, both the petitions are amenable to be decided together being arising out of the same FIR, and the same relief has been sought for. For the sake of

brevity facts are being taken from CRM-M-26818-2024.



CRM-M-26818-2024

-2-

2. Through the instant petition, the petitioner(s) craves for indulgence of this Court for being enlarged on regular bail, in case FIR No.13 dated 21.02.2024, under Sections 307, 323, 506, 160, 148, 149 and 120-B IPC, and under Sections 25/27 of the Arms Act, 1959, registered at P.S. Division No.1, District Ludhiana.

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST THE PETITIONER

3. The brief facts which are culled out by learned trial Court while declining the relief of regular bail, are as under:-

“Brief factual matrix of the case are that on 21.2.2024 SI Jagmohan 6 Singh received a secret information that at night at about 12:30AM Goldy Sibal, Ankur, Rubal, Lavi, Happy Saluja, Saurav, Illu, Sajan Sharma, Manu, Kabir Kanojia, Ishan Chatwal and 5-6 un known persons belonging to one group and Shubham Arora @ Mota Nadeem, Lucky, Kaku, Vishal, Rishav Benipal @Nanu, Arun Sharma, Dipanshu, Yogi Rai and 5-6 un known persons of the other group came in their cars bearing no. PB10-JGN-5800, PB10GF- 3713, PB10JL-9888 and PB91-U-5206 and clashed in the street near the house of Goldy Sibal. They pelted stones and bottles at each other and also used deadly weapons. Shubam @ Mota and Nadeem suffered bullet injury. Their accomplices took them to the hospital. So an FIR under Sections 307, 323, 201, 506, 160, 148,149 of IPC and 25 of Arms Act has been registered against accused Goldy Sibal, Ankur, Rubal, Lavi, Happy Saluja, Saurav, Illu, Sajan Sharma, Monu, Kabir Kanojia, Ishan Chatwal alongwith 5-6 un known persons(first group). Subham Arora @ Mota, Nadeem, Lucky, Kaku, Vishal, Rishav Benipal @ Nanu, Arun Sharma, Dipanshu, Yogi Rai and 10-12 unknown persons(second group). On 26.2.2024 Subham Arora @ Mota and Nadeem were discharged from the DMC hospital, Ludhiana and they were arrested in this case. In pursuance of their statement got recorded under section 27 of Evidence Act, accused Subham Arora @ Mota and Mohd. Nadeem got recovered one revolver of 32 bore and one pistol



CRM-M-26818-2024

-3-

of 32 bore respectively and they disclosed that empty cartridges were thrown by them and an offence under Section 201 of IPC was added in this case.

SUBMISSIONS OF LEARNED COUNSEL FOR THE PETITIONER

4. Learned senior counsel appearing for the petitioner, namely, Gurkamal Singh, in asking for the relief of regular bail, would submit that in fact the petitioner was not present at the spot. Rather, he was called by one of the injured after the occurrence, and thereupon, he left his house at 12.53 am, on the date of occurrence, to the spot, and extended help to one of the injured persons. He further submits that the petitioner being the President of Sabzi Mandi, Ludhiana, was called upon. He further submits that no overact has been attributed to the present petitioner, and rather the entire FIR is based upon on a secret information received by the police. To set up this plea, he also relies upon Annexure P-2, which are still photographs of CCTV footage, to show that he was leaving his house at 12.38 am after the occurrence.

5. So far as petitioner-Labhi Singh @ Lavi is concerned, learned counsel for the petitioner would submit that no role is attributed to the present petitioner, even if the contents of FIR is considered to be a gospel truth. The petitioner has clean antecedents, and not a part of any gang. Both the learned counsel for the petitioner(s) also submits that the petitioner(s) has faced incarceration of more than 02 months and 24 days as on today.

SUBMISSIONS OF THE LEARNED STATE COUNSEL

6. Per contra, learned State counsel, has vociferously opposed the prayer for grant of regular bail on the ground that this is a case of gang



CRM-M-26818-2024

-4-

fight, and both the petitioners are member of a criminal gang, and they have been arrested from Saharanpur on dated 13.03.2024. He further submits that during the investigation, Gurkamal Singh, got recovered two country made pistols, two magazines and 8 live cartridges. He further draws the attention of this Court towards the antecedents of the petitioner-Gurkamal Singh, who is stated to be involved in three other cases, and has produced the custody certificate of the petitioner(s), which are taken on record. However, learned State counsel on instructions imparted to him by ASI Dharamvir Singh, very fairly admits that the only role to the petitioner(s) are that they are present at the spot, and no overact has been attributed to them. He further submits that the investigation in the instant FIR, has already been conducted, and the challan stands presented on dated 25.04.2024. He further submits that charges have not yet been framed, and no witness has been examined so far.

ANALYSIS

7. 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.

8. “*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



CRM-M-26818-2024

-5-

accused for trial, without any inconvenience, however, in case the presence of an accused can be secured otherwise, then detention is not compulsory.

9. 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.

10. 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.”

11. 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 of 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 judicial 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."

12. This Court has examined the instant petition on the touchstone of the hereinabove extracted settled legal principle(s) of law and is of the considered opinion that the instant petitions are amenable for being allowed.

FINAL ORDER

13. Considering the allegations against the petitioner(s), as no role is assigned to them and the days of incarceration suffered by the present petitioner(s) as they are behind the bars since dated 13.03.2024, stage of trial which admittedly has yet to began, this Court deems it fit and appropriate to grant the concession of regular bail to the petitioner(s). Therefore, without commenting upon the merits and circumstances of the present case, both the present petitions are **allowed**. The petitioner(s) are ordered to be released on bail on furnishing of their bail bond and surety

bond to the satisfaction of concerned Chief Judicial Magistrate/trial

**CRM-M-26818-2024****-10-**

Court/Duty Magistrate.

14. However, it is clarified that if in future, the petitioner(s) is found indulging in commission of similar offences, as are involved herein, the respondent-State shall be at liberty to make an appropriate application seeking cancellation of regular bail, as granted by this Court. Moreover, anything observed here-in-above shall have no effect on the merits of the trial and is meant for deciding the present petition only.

12.06.2024*D.Bansal***(KULDEEP TIWARI)
JUDGE**

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