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IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA AT
CHANDIGARH

CRM-M-40278-2024
DATE OF DECISION: 27.08.2024

DEVI DUTT SHARMA ...PETITIONER

Versus

STATE OF HARYANA ... RESPONDENT

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE SANDEEP MOUDGIL

Present: Mr. Amit Choudhary, Advocate for the petitioner(s).
Mr. B.S.Virk, Sr. DAG, Haryana.
Mr. A.S. Salar, Advocate for the complainant.

SANDEEP MOUDGIL, J (ORAL)

This petition has been filed under Section 483 of Bhartiya
Nagrik Surksha Sahinta, 2023 for grant of regular bail in case in FIR
No. 191 dated 12.05.2023 under Sections 420, 467, 468, 471 IPC,
1860 registered at PS Chandimandir, District Panchkula.

2. Prosecution story set up in the present case as per the version
in the FIR read as under :-

*'DSP, Police District Panchkula, Subject:
Application against Devi Dutt son of Sh. Amar Chand Kharog Bhoj
Balag Morni for illegally grabbing the billion of rupees land of
Forest Department in Village Kharog by tempering with the old
record and to get it vacated and registering a case against Devi
Dutt, Naib Tehsildar (Ret.). Respected Sir, it is respectfully stated
that Devi Dutt son of Sh. Amar Chand, Village Kharog is retired
from Revenue Department as Naib Tehsildar and with the motive to
his own personal as well as to facilitate his family he tempered
with the Revenue Records in connivance with some other persons*



as per the Jamabandi for the year 1965-66, whereby as per the Jamabandi Khasra No. 175, Area 0.2 Biswa, which he made 2 Bigha in the Jamabandi during his service period and the names of his two uncles Madho and Ballu and Nand Ram, Shugan Chand, Mahima Dutt by deleting their names as cultivator and only the name of his father Sh. Amar Chand was added or the same was done in connivance with some other persons and by tempering with the Masavi of 1916-17 in the Bandobasti Record he mentioned a road from Morni to Tikkar Taal which road was made in 1994 or by cutting down a tartima towards the road and made Khasra No.180 measuring 6 Bigha related to his brother Desh Raj towards that road and one Khasra No.179 area measuring 10 Bigha is also made.. Because, Devi Dutt was appointed as a Sadar Kanungo at Panchkula for a longer duration that without permission tempering with the record or in connivance with other person with the motive to facilitate his family these people illegally encroached the multimillion land of Forest Department measuring more than 20-25 Bigha and they also illegally encroached the water body made by forest department and Gram Panchayat by immediately getting vacated from the illegal encroachment a investigation should be conducted against Devi Dutt, Naib Tehsildar (Ret.) House No.1137/21, 26 Panchkula by registering a case against him because in Village Kharog whatever land owned by the State Government there is not a single Khasra Number is mentioned in shizra or masavi except Khasra No.179 and 180 which belong to Devi Dutt and his family, it clearly shows that there is some kind of tempering with record. Note: A complete investigation should be conducted of all the records of Devi Dutt, Naib Tehsildar (Ret.) during his service carrier from Patwari to onwards. It never knows that how many records were tempered with Devi Dutt and how much property by this way. It is a matter of investigation, this matter should be got investigated by some independent investigating agency so that truth of his acts should come forward and the billion rupees land of Forest Department should got



vacated from his illegal possession. Thanks. Applicant Tek Chand son of Sh. Kashi Ram, Village Bana Morni Hills, Phone No.94169-20196. A copy of the same is also sent to Home Minister, Haryana Government, Chandigarh for necessary action.'

3. **Contentions**

On behalf of the petitioner

Learned counsel for the petitioner has argued that the petitioner has been falsely implicated in the present case and the alleged offence is not committed by him. The allegation levelled against him is that he had tampered the revenue record but there is no direct evidence against the petitioner related to the allegations. He has further argued that the antecedents of the petitioner are clean and no fruitful purpose would be served by keeping the petitioner behind the bars as conclusion of trial would take long time as challan is presented on 19.07.2024.

On behalf of the State

On the other hand, learned State Counsel appearing on advance notice, accepts notice on behalf of respondent-State and has filed the custody certificate of the petitioner, which is taken on record. According to which, the petitioner is behind bars for almost 2 months and 16 days.

Learned State Counsel on instructions from the Investigating Officer opposes the prayer for grant of regular bail but is not in a position to controvert the submissions made by counsel for the petitioner. He informs the Court that in the present FIR challan stands presented on 19.07.2024 and charges are yet to be framed.



4. Analysis

From the above case it can be culled out that the petitioner has already suffered sufficient period in custody i.e. 2 months and 16 days and as per the principle of the criminal jurisprudence, no one should be considered guilty, till the guilt is proved beyond reasonable doubt, whereas in the instant case, challan stands presented on 19.07.2024 and charges are yet to be framed which is sufficient for this Court to infer that the conclusion of trial is likely to take considerable time and detaining the petitioner behind the bars for an indefinite period would solve no purpose.

Reliance can be placed upon the judgment of the Apex Court rendered in “***Dataram versus State of Uttar Pradesh and another***”, **2018(2) R.C.R. (Criminal) 131**, wherein it has been held that the grant of bail is a general rule and putting persons in jail or in prison or in correction home is an exception. Relevant paras of the said judgment is reproduced as under:-

“2. A fundamental postulate of criminal jurisprudence is the presumption of innocence, meaning thereby that a person is believed to be innocent until found guilty. However, there are instances in our criminal law where a reverse onus has been placed on an accused with regard to some specific offences but that is another matter and does not detract from the fundamental postulate in respect of other offences. Yet another important facet of our criminal jurisprudence is that the grant of bail is the general rule and putting a person in jail or in a prison or in a correction home (whichever expression one may wish to use) is an exception. Unfortunately, some of these basic principles appear to have been lost sight of with the result that more and more persons are being incarcerated and for longer periods. This does not do any good to our criminal jurisprudence or to our society.”



3. *There is no doubt that the grant or denial of bail is entirely the discretion of the judge considering a case but even so, the exercise of judicial discretion has been circumscribed by a large number of decisions rendered by this Court and by every High Court in the country. Yet, occasionally there is a necessity to introspect whether denying bail to an accused person is the right thing to do on the facts and in the circumstances of a case.*

4. *While so introspecting, among the factors that need to be considered is whether the accused was arrested during investigations when that person perhaps has the best opportunity to tamper with the evidence or influence witnesses. If the investigating officer does not find it necessary to arrest an accused person during investigations, a strong case should be made out for placing that person in judicial custody after a charge sheet is filed. Similarly, it is important to ascertain whether the accused was participating in the investigations to the satisfaction of the investigating officer and was not absconding or not appearing when required by the investigating officer. Surely, if an accused is not hiding from the investigating officer or is hiding due to some genuine and expressed fear of being victimised, it would be a factor that a judge would need to consider in an appropriate case. It is also necessary for the judge to consider whether the accused is a first-time offender or has been accused of other offences and if so, the nature of such offences and his or her general conduct. The poverty or the deemed indigent status of an accused is also an extremely important factor and even Parliament has taken notice of it by incorporating an Explanation to section 436 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973. An equally soft approach to incarceration has been taken by Parliament by inserting section 436A in the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973.*

5. *To put it shortly, a humane attitude is required to be adopted by a judge, while dealing with an application for remanding a suspect or an accused person to police custody or judicial custody. There are several reasons for this including maintaining the dignity of an*



accused person, howsoever poor that person might be, the requirements of Article 21 of the Constitution and the fact that there is enormous overcrowding in prisons, leading to social and other problems as noticed by this Court in In Re-Inhuman Conditions in 1382 Prisons, 2017(4) RCR (Criminal) 416: 2017(5) Recent Apex Judgments (R.A.J.) 408 : (2017) 10 SCC 658

6. *The historical background of the provision for bail has been elaborately and lucidly explained in a recent decision delivered in Nimesh Tara chand Shah v. Union of India, 2017 (13) SCALE 609 going back to the days of the Magna Carta. In that decision, reference was made to Gurbaksh Singh Sibbia v. State of Punjab, (1980) 2 SCC 565 in which it is observed that it was held way back in Nagendra v. King-Emperor, AIR 1924 Calcutta 476 that bail is not to be withheld as a punishment. Reference was also made to Emperor v. Hutchinson, AIR 1931 Allahabad 356 wherein it was observed that grant of bail is the rule and refusal is the exception. The provision for bail is therefore age-old and the liberal interpretation to the provision for bail is almost a century old, going back to colonial days.*

7. *However, we should not be understood to mean that bail should be granted in every case. 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 and in a humane manner and compassionately. 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.”*

Therefore, to elucidate further, this Court is conscious of the fundamental law that right to speedy trial is a part of reasonable, fair and just procedure guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution of India. This constitutional right cannot be denied to the accused as is the mandate of the Apex court in “Hussainara Khatoon and ors (IV) v. Home Secretary, State of Bihar, Patna”, (1980) 1 SCC 98. Besides this,

reference can be drawn upon that pre-conviction period of the under-trials should be as short as possible keeping in view the nature of accusation and the severity of punishment in case of conviction and the nature of supporting evidence, reasonable apprehension of tampering with the witness or apprehension of threat to the complainant.

5. **Decision:**

In view of the aforesaid discussions made hereinabove, the petitioner is directed to be released on regular bail on his furnishing bail and surety bonds to the satisfaction of the trial Court/Duty Magistrate, concerned.

However, it is made clear that anything stated hereinabove shall not be construed as an expression of opinion on the merits of the case.

The petition in the aforesaid terms stands allowed.

(SANDEEP MOUDGIL)
JUDGE

27.08.2024
anuradha

<i>Whether speaking/reasoned</i>	<i>Yes/No</i>
<i>Whether reportable</i>	<i>Yes/No</i>