

IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA
AT CHANDIGARH

210

CRM-M-49853-2023

Date of Decision : **March 05, 2023**

HARSHARAN SINGH

.....Petitioner

VERSUS

STATE OF PUNJAB

.....Respondent

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE KULDEEP TIWARI

Present : Mr.Rishu Mahajan, Advocate for the petitioner.

Mr. Akshay Kumar, AAG, Punjab.

KULDEEP TIWARI. J.(Oral)

1. Through the instant petition filed under Section 439 Cr.P.C. the petitioner prays for grant of regular bail in case FIR No.126 dated 04.08.2023, under Section 22, 25 and 27(a) of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985, registered at Police Station Kamboj, District Amritsar (Rural)

SUBMISSIONS OF LEARNED COUNSEL FOR THE PETITIONER

2. Learned counsel for the petitioner submits the petitioner was arrested allegedly carrying 500 intoxicant tablets and currency note of Rs.500/-. In the investigation, the petitioner suffered a disclosure statement that he had purchased infact 1500 intoxicant tablets from one Harpreet Singh alias Raja Singh, at the rate of Rs. 15 per tablets and out of which he has already sold 1000 intoxicant tablets at the rate of Rs.20 per tablet, and the drug proceeds of Rs.20,000 was also recovered from

the present petitioner.

3. He further submits that the person whose name was disclosed by the present petitioner i.e. Harpreet Singh alias Raja Singh, is a co-accused in the instant FIR vide GDR No.11, Dated 05.08.2023, who is yet to be arrested by the police.

4. He further submits that the co-accused has never been arrested, and except the recovery of 500 intoxicant tablets, and currency note of Rs.500/- at the spot, and subsequently, Rs.20,000/- during the investigation, no other recovery was effected from the present petitioner, and no other accused person was arrested so far by the police. Therefore, the recovery of contraband confines only to 500 loose intoxicant tablets, and as per the FSL report, the weight of these tablets is prescribed as 338 mg./tablet, and therefore, total weight of recovered contraband comes out to be 169 grams. The alleged contraband salt in the loose tablets is stated to be 'Tramadol Hydrochloride' as per the FSL report, and the commercial quantity prescribed under the statute is 250 grams.

5. He further submits that the recovered quantity of contraband from the petitioner, falls within the ambit of non-commercial quantity, therefore, rigors of Section 37 of the NDPS Act, is not applicable to this case.

SUBMISSIONS OF THE LEARNED STATE COUNSEL

6. Per contra, the learned State counsel opposed the asked for relief, and a short reply dated 21.02.2024, by way of an affidavit of Mr. Sukhjinderpal Singh, DSP, Sub-Division, Attari, Amritsar (Rural), and also the custody certificate *qua* the petitioner, have been filed, which are

taken on record. The custody certificate makes revelations that the petitioner has faced incarceration for 7 months and 02 days as on today, and the petitioner is not involved in any other criminal case.

ANALYSIS

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 ***“Nikesh Tarachand Shah V. Union of India”, (2018) 11 SCC 1***, the Hon’ble Supreme Court has recorded the following:-

“14. In Gurbaksh Singh Sibbia v. State of Punjab, (1980) 2 SCC 565 at 586-588, the purpose of granting bail is set out 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 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 All 504 : 33 Cri LJ 94] 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. Hutchinson [AIR 1931 All 356, 358 : 32 Cri LJ 1271] it was said that it was very unwise to make an attempt to lay down any particular rules which will 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.

28. *Coming nearer home, it was observed by Krishna Iyer, J., in Gudikanti Narasimhulu v. Public Prosecutor [(1978) 1 SCC 240 : 1978 SCC (Cri) 115] that: (SCC p. 242, para 1)*

“... the issue of bail is one of liberty, justice, public safety and burden of the public treasury, all of which insist that a developed jurisprudence of bail is integral to a socially sensitized judicial process. . . . After all, personal liberty of an accused or convict is fundamental, suffering lawful eclipse only in terms of procedure established by law. The last four words of Article 21 are the life of that human right.”

29. *In Gurcharan Singh v. State (Delhi Administration) [(1978) 1 SCC 118 : 1978 SCC (Cri) 41] it was observed by Goswami, J., who spoke for the court, that: (SCC p. 129, para 29)*

“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, Volume 8, p. 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 ***Siddharam Satlingappa Mhetre v. State of Maharashtra, Criminal Appeal No.2271 of 2010***, the Hon’ble Supreme Court has insisted upon striking a perfect balance of sanctity of an individual’s liberty as well as the interest of the society, in grant or refusing bail. The relevant extract of the judgment (supra) is reproduced hereinafter:-

3. The society has a vital interest in grant or refusal of bail because every criminal offence is the offence against the State. The order granting or refusing bail must reflect perfect balance between the conflicting interests, namely, sanctity of individual liberty and the interest of the society. The law of bails dovetails two conflicting interests namely, on the one hand, the requirements of shielding the society from the hazards of those committing crimes and

potentiality of repeating the same crime while on bail and on the other hand absolute adherence of the fundamental principle of criminal jurisprudence regarding presumption of innocence of an accused until he is found guilty and the sanctity of individual liberty.

11. 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 petition is amenable for being allowed.

12. The reason for forming the above inference emanates from the factum that:- (i) The alleged recovered of contraband falls within the ambit of non-commercial quantity, therefore, the bar contained under Section 37 of the Act is not applicable (ii) The petitioner has suffered incarceration for about 7 months and 2 days as on today, in the instant FIR (iii) the petitioner is not involved in any other criminal case.

FINAL ORDER

13. Considering that the trial will take long time to conclude and the instant recovery from the present petitioner falls under non-commercial quantity, and has already faced incarceration for about 7 months and 2 days, 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 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.

14. However, it is clarified that if in future, the petitioner 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.

March 05, 2023
dharamvir

(KULDEEP TIWARI)
JUDGE

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