



IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA AT
CHANDIGARH

219

CRM-M-48010-2024

DATE OF DECISION: 30.09.2024

SWARAN SINGH

...PETITIONER

Versus

STATE OF PUNJAB

... RESPONDENT

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE SANDEEP MOUDGIL

Present: Mr. Rakesh Kumar, Advocate for the petitioner(s).
Mr. Jaspal Singh Guru, AAG, Punjab.

SANDEEP MOUDGIL, J (ORAL)

1. Relief Sought

The jurisdiction of this Court has been invoked under Section 439 Cr.P.C., for grant of regular bail to the petitioner in FIR No.78 (Annexure P-1), dated 23.12.2022, under Sections 21/29/61/85 of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act and Section 411 of IPC was added subsequently, registered at Police Station Talwandi Chaudhrian, District Kapurthala.

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

‘SHO PS Talwandi Chaudhrian District Kapurthala, Sat Sri Akal. Today I, SI alongwith ASI Swaran Singh 1177/KPT, ASI Darbara Singh 93/KPT, S/Ct. Bachittar Singh 46/KPT, Ct. Jagroop Singh 268/KPT, L/Ct. Harpreet Kaur 577/KPT by riding Government Vehicle No. PB09-X-8441 whose driver is ASI Manjit Singh 638/KPT and by taking along laptop and printer are present at Mand Faridpur Chowk Dhusi Bann Talwandi Chaudhrian for special patrolling, checking of suspicious persons and mobile nakabandi and in the meantime secret



informer gave information to me that Lovepreet Singh @ Love son of Surjit Singh, Sonu Singh son of Mukhtiar Singh, Swaran Singh son of Mahinder Singh residents of Mundi Chhana and Gurpreet Singh @ Gopi son of Jaswant Singh resident of Dharam Dian Chhana, PS Mehatpur, District Jalandhar in connivance with Jassi son of Bute Dian Channa, PS Mehatpur, District Jalandhar do illegal trade of selling intoxicating substances and today Lovepreet Singh @ Love, Sonu Singh, Swaran Singh and Gurpreet Singh Gopl alongwith one motorcycle without registration number are sitting at the bank of river in the area of Village Mand Mahiwal and are waiting for customers to supply Heroin, if raided immediately then they can be apprehended. This information is believed to be true. Prima-facie offence punishable u/s 21,29-61-85 NDPS Act is made out against above mentioned persons on the basis of secret information. Whereupon, I made phone call from my Mob. No. 79733-63216 on Mob. No. 98784-05812 of D.S.P. Sahib Sultanpur Lodhi, apprised him about the facts and requested him to come at the spot and wrote and sent Ruqa to police station by the hand of L/Ct. Harpreet Kaur 577/KPT for registration of FIR. Number be intimated after registration of FIR. Intimation be given at control room and to senior officers with wireless message. Special reports be issued. I, SI alongwith co-employees am going to Dhusi Bann Village Mahiwal the place disclosed by secret informer. Latitude 31.2931406 and Longitude 75.1632073. Sd/- Nirmal Singh CIA Staff Kapurthala Date 23.12.2022. Today present in area of Mand Faridpur Chowk Dhusi Bann at 02:50 PM. Today at police station: At receipt of above Ruqa at police station, above FIR is registered. After registration of FIR, original Ruqa along with copy of FIR Is being sent by the hand of coming L/Ct. to SI at the spot for investigation. Intimation is being sent at control room with wireless message. Special reports are prepared and are being sent to senior officers and Duty Magistrate by the hand of S/Ct. Arvinder Singh 1575/KPT. Completes Report No. 19 Date 23.12.2022 Time 4:10 PM.'

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 as per the version of the prosecution, the recovery of intoxicant substance was affected from the open seat of the motorcycle wherein co-accused along with the petitioner were standing near the motorcycle and were arrested by the police, however, no recovery was effected from the conscious possession of the petitioner. He submits that similarly situated co-accused namely Gurpreet Singh @ Gopi has already been granted concession of regular bail vide order dated 20.01.2024 passed in CRM-M-31956-2023. He has further argued that the antecedents of the petitioner are clean. He submits that no fruitful purpose would be served by keeping the petitioner behind the bars as conclusion of trial would take long time as out of total 15 Prosecution Witnesses, none has been examined so far.

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 1 year, 9 months and 1 day.

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 02.06.2023 and charges are yet not framed.

4. Analysis



From the above case it can be culled out that the petitioner has already suffered sufficient period in custody i.e. 1 year, 9 months and 1 day, similarly situated co-accused has already been granted concession of bail by this Court, antecedents of the petitioner are clean 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 02.06.2023 and charges are yet not framed, out of 15 prosecution witnesses, none has been examined so far 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 Nikesh 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 principle of law that right to speedy trial is a part of reasonable, fair and just procedure enshrined 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

30.09.2024
anuradha

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