



IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA AT
CHANDIGARH

221

CRM-M-48298-2024
DATE OF DECISION: 01.10.2024

MEET SINGH

...PETITIONER

Versus

STATE OF PUNJAB

... RESPONDENT

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE SANDEEP MOUDGIL

Present: Mr. P.S.Sekhon, Advocate for the petitioner(s).

Mr. J.S. Rattu, DAG, Punjab.

SANDEEP MOUDGIL, J (ORAL)1. Relief Sought

The petitioner has filed the present petition under Section 439 Cr.P.C seeking grant of regular bail in case FIR No.34 dated 05.04.2021 under Sections 302, 148, 149 IPC and Section 34 IPC registered at Police Station Sadar Ahmedgarh, District Malerkotla (earlier District Sangrur).

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

'It is at this time a statement of wife of Late Joginder Singh resident of Matoi aged 30years mob No9915708650 has been addressed to I SI SHO Amandeep Kaur 32 JRT Sadar for of FIR under Section 302, 148, 149 of IPC against Surjit Singh son of Balkar Singh Sethi son of Surjit Singh Sukho wife of Surjit Singh Meet Gurmeet sons of Balkar Singh of Meet Singh residents of Matoi Shehbaz son of Dara Khan of Rodiwal Laddi son of Naiti resident of Chuhan-ke now tenant at Matoi has been received through PHG Jagtar Singh 48313 Which is as under



Statement of Kashmiro wife of late Joginder Singh resident of Matoi aged 30years, mobile No. 9915708650. It is stated that I am resident of above mentioned address and I am a labourer On 02.04.2021 my husband Joginder Singh was going to Malerkotla from home on foot with regard to work at about 9:00 AM then on the way he took lift on a motorcycle from one passerby When he reached about 100 meter ahead of our Flour mill on the road going from our village to Malerkotla then wife of Surjit Singh resident of Matoi stopped the by giving signal to the bike driver and had brought down my husband Joginder Singh from motorcycle. At that time Surjit son of Balkar Singh Sethi son of Surjit Singh came there and they gave beating to my husband. Thereafter they all three brought my husband Joginder Singh to the house of Surjit. At the house of Surjit Singh, Meet Singh son of Balkar Singh, Pinki wife of Meet Singh Gurmeet Singh son of Balkar Singh All residents of Matoi and Laddi son of Neti, resident of Chauhan-ke now tenant at Meet Singh resident of Matoi and Shehbaj son of Dara Khan resident of village Rodiwal were sitting When Surjit Singh brought my husband Joginder Singh then they all gave beating to my husband with dandas, sticks with an intention to kill him due to which he suffered lots of injuries on his body. All this was told by my husband Joginder Singh on return to home on 03.04.2021 I took my husband Joginder Singh to Civil Hospital Ahmedgarh at about 5:00 PM and they referred my husband to Civil Hospital Malerkotla due to lots of injuries. Thereafter I got my husband admitted at CH Malerkotla and his treatment was going on there, all the above said persons gave beatings to my husband with sticks and danda with intention to kill and he succumbed to injuries on 04.04.2021 at around 11:00/11:30 at night. My husband has been murdered by Surjit Singh son of Balkar Singh Sethi son of Surjit Singh Sukho wife of Surjit Singh, Meet, Gurmeet sons of Balkar Singh Pinky wife of Meet Singh residents of Matoi Shehbaz son of Dara Khan resident of



Rodiwal Laddi son of Naiti resident of Chauhan Ke now tenant at Matoi by giving injuries with sticks with an intention to kill legal action may be taken against these persons. Today I along with my dever Manjit Singh son of Bir Singh have met you at the outer gate of Civil Hospital Malerkotla and has got recorded my statement to you appropriate legal action may be taken against them. RTI Kashmiro, endorsed Manjit Singh son of Bir Singh, resident of Matoi, attested SD/- Amandeep Kaur SI/SHO, P.S. Sadar Ahmedgarh. Dated 05.04.2021.'

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 no specific role has been attributed to the petitioner. He further submits that there is no cogent evidence with the police to connect the petitioner with the present FIR. He submits that the petitioner has been in custody since 03.04.2024 and 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 21 Prosecution Witnesses, none has been examined so far. He further submits that the co-accused namely Jagsir Khan alias Laddi has already been granted concession of regular bail vide order dated 23.08.2024 passed in CRM-M-39004-2024.

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 5 months and 28 days.

Learned State Counsel on instructions from the Investigating Officer opposes the prayer for grant of regular bail on the ground that the petitioner is involved in one more FIR 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 07.05.2024 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. 5 months and 28 days, similarly situated co-accused has already been granted concession of regular bail by this Court, 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 07.05.2024 and charges are yet to be framed, out of 21 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.

As far as the pendency of other cases and involvement of the petitioner in other cases is concerned, reliance can be placed upon the order of this Court rendered in CRM-M-25914-2022 titled as “**Baljinder Singh alias Rock vs. State of Punjab**” decided on 02.03.2023, wherein, while referring Article 21 of the Constitution of



India, this Court has held that no doubt, at the time of granting bail, the criminal antecedents of the petitioner are to be looked into but at the same time it is equally true that the appreciation of evidence during the course of trial has to be looked into with reference to the evidence in that case alone and not with respect to the evidence in the other pending cases. In such eventuality, strict adherence to the rule of denial of bail on account of pendency of other cases/convictions in all probability would land the petitioner in a situation of denial of the concession of bail.

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

01.10.2024
anuradha

Whether speaking/reasoned
Whether reportable

Yes/No
Yes/No