

2024:PHHC:148172



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IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA
AT CHANDIGARH

CRM-M-55276-2024
DECIDED ON: 13.11.2024

SUNIL @ SUNIL KUMAR
.....PETITIONER

VERSUS

STATE OF HARYANA
.....RESPONDENT

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE SANDEEP MOUDGIL

Present: Mr. Anshul Sharma, Advocate with
Mr. Lalit Sharma and Mr. Vaibhav Singla, Advocates
for the petitioner.

Mr. Chetan Sharma, DAG Haryana.

SANDEEP MOUDGIL, J (ORAL)

1. Relief Sought

The jurisdiction of this Court under Section 439 Cr.P.C., has been invoked for the grant of regular bail to the petitioner in FIR No. 319, dated 07.04.2023, under Sections 379-B, 201, 34 of IPC, 1860 registered at Police Station Civil lines, District Sirsa (Annexure P-1).

2. Facts

Facts as narrated in the FIR reads as under:-

“To, Incharge Police Post Khairpur Sirsa Sir, It is requested that I am Amit Mehta, son of Shri Ganpat Rai, resident of street no. 4, Friends Colony, Sirsa and I running a shop by the name of Mehta Mobile

Accessories near MC Market, near LIC Office Sirsa. On 06.04.2023, after closing my mobile shop, at around 9.00 pm, I was going to my home on my electronic scooter, when I passed through Maharana Pratap Chowk, and reached near Raj Health Care Center, Kanganpur Road, Khairpur Sirsa, there were four boys on two motorcycles. One boy got down from both the motorcycles and had iron rods in their hands. One boy attacked me from the front with the rod in his hand and caused injuries on my left arm, left leg and waist and the other boy attacked me from behind with the rod in his hand which hit me on my head and waist and I had a bag hanging on my waist. He tried to snatch the bag but could not succeed and one of my mobile phones mark APPLE IPHONE was snatched away from my pocket. After receiving the information, my friend Amit, son of Shri Krishna Lal resident of Rania, came to me on the spot, arranged the vehicle and took me to the government hospital Sirsa for treatment. There the doctor bandaged my wound, prepared my MLR and gave it to me. Strict legal action should be taken against four unknown boys, who riding on two motorcycles, made a fatal attack on me with the rods which they were holding in their hands and snatched away my mobile phone and my mobile phone should be recovered. Sd/ Amit Mehta Applicant Amit Mehta son of Shri Ganpat Rai resident street no. 4 Friends Colony Sirsa mobile no. 70821-22504 dated 07.04.2023. Police action today dated 07.04.2023. I along with SPO Ajay Kumar no. 74 was present at Maharana Pratap Hisar Road Sirsa that Amit Mehta son of Shri Ganpat Ram resident of street no. 4 Friends Colony Sirsa met with his friend Amit son of Krishna Lal resident of Rania with a typed application with MLR No.KR/58 06/04/2023 Dated 06.04.2023 Amit Kumar presented that Doctor has described total 7 injuries. All the injuries blunt if any described. From the application and MLR, on finding offence is committed under section 379-B, 34 IPC, complaint for registration of Fir sent through SPO Ajay Kumar No. 74 to police. After registration the case, the number of the same be informed. The special report of case should be sent by special carrier to the officers. I, S.I, complainant Amit Kumar and his friend Amit

Kumar, son of Krishna Lal are leaving for the spot of incident. Today at Maharana Pratap Chowk Hisar Road Sirsa Sd/- Ran Singh 776 Police Post Khairpur Police Station Civil Line Sirsa Date 07.04.2023 At- 12:15. Today after receiving the complaint at Police Station through SPO Ajay Kumar No.74, the above mentioned case has been registered and a copy of the police file and original complaint is being sent to the investigator. A special report of the case is being prepared and e-mail is being sent to the Area Magistrate and higher officials.”

3. Contentions:

On behalf of the petitioner

Learned counsel for the petitioner contends that the petitioner has been falsely implicated in the present case on the basis of disclosure statement of co-accused and has not been attributed any specific injury. He further asserts that no recovery is to be made from the petitioner and charges have been framed on 19.10.2023 and out of total 22 prosecution witnesses, only 3 stands examined so far. He has drawn attention of this Court to an order dated 04.03.2024 (Annexure P-3) passed by this Court in CRM-M-10554-2024 vide which co-accused namely Ajay @ Ajia has already been granted the concession of regular bail.

On behalf of the State

Learned State counsel has filed the custody certificate of the petitioner, which is taken on record. He prays for dismissal of the present petition stating that the petitioner is a habitual offender, as he is involved in multiple cases, therefore, does not deserve the concession of bail.

4. Analysis

Be that as it may, considering the fact that no recovery is to be effected from the petitioner, co-accused has already been granted the concession of regular bail vide order dated 04.03.2024, and the petitioner has already suffered incarceration of 1 year, 4 months and 10 days, as is evident from the perusal of the

custody certificate added with the fact that investigation is complete, challan stands presented on 20.07.2023, charges stands framed on 19.10.2023 and out of total 22 prosecution witnesses only 3 has been examined so far, meaning thereby conclusion of trial shall take considerable time, no useful purpose would be served by keeping the petitioner behind the bars for an indefinite period, which would curtail right of the petitioner for speedy trial and expeditious disposal, as enshrined under Article 21 of the Constitution of India as has been time and again discussed by this Court, while relying upon the judgment of the Apex Court passed in ***Dataram Singh vs. State of Uttar Pradesh & Anr. 2018(2) R.C.R. (Criminal) 131***. 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 basic and 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 lend the petitioner in a situation of denial the concession of bail.

5. **DECISION:**

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

In the afore-said terms, the present petition is hereby allowed.

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

(SANDEEP MOUDGIL)
JUDGE

13.11.2024

Meenu

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