

IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA AT
CHANDIGARH

235

CRM-M-254-2025

DATE OF DECISION: 14.01.2025

DEEPAK KUMAR

...PETITIONER

Versus

STATE OF PUNJAB

... RESPONDENT

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE SANDEEP MOUDGIL

Present: Mr.Mohd. Jameel, Advocate for the petitioner(s).

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

SANDEEP MOUDGIL, J (ORAL)**1. Relief Sought**

This petition has been filed under Section 483 of Bhartiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita 2023 for grant of regular bail to the petitioner in F.I.R. No.88 dated 24.07.2023, Under Section 22 of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985, Police Station City-II, Malerkotla, District Malerkotla (Annexure P- 1).

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

‘Station House Officer, Police Station City-2, Malerkotla, Jai, Hind. Today 1 SI alongwith ASI Harjit Singh Number 496/SGR, S.C. Amritpal Singh 1251/Sangrur, C Tejvir Singh Number 1992/SGR were present at Grid Chowk, Malerkotla for checking of suspicious persons and vehicles in official vehicle bearing registration No. PB-65-BA-8115 being driven by SC Nirbhai Singh 990/SGR alongwith laptop, Inverter, Printer etc. then at about 07:30 PM, a secret informer came to me and informed that Deepak Kumar son of Nand Lal, resident of Azad



Nagar, at present Ravidas Nagar, Malerkotla is habitual of selling intoxicant tablets by taking from outside. Today also, Deepak Kumar is waiting for his customers for selling intoxicant tablets near his house. If a raid is conducted near the house of Deepak Kumar with planning then Deepak Kumar can be nabbed and intoxicant tablets in huge quantity can be recovered from his possession. His description is that slim body, mulla fashioned, average colour, and he is wearing red color T-shirt and blue colored lower. Information is confirmed and reliable. Then I SI on the basis of information, alongwith official companions raided near the house of Deepak Kumar and at that time, it was about 8:00 p.m. then as per description of informer, one person in front of gate of his house was standing in the light of lights who was carrying white coloured plastic carry bag in his right hand whoon seeing police party coming towards him threw carry bag carrying in right hand and tried to run away. I St with the help of official companions nabbed him and asked his whereabouts who disclosed his name as Deepak Kumar son of Nand Lal, resident of Azad Nagar, at present Ravidas Nagar, Malerkotla. Then I SI check the carry bag thrown by Deepak Kumar in torch light in which strips of tablets were seen, carry bag was tied. Then I SI after opening the nob of carry bag checked the same and total 30 strips each containing 60/60 tablets total 1800 intoxicant tables Mark Alprasaef 0.5 NRX Alprazolam Tablets IP 0.5 mg, all are having batch No. PCCAA872 Mfg. Date 12/2021, Ex. Date 11/2024 were recovered. Thereafter, I SI after keeping the recovered intoxicant tablets in the same plastic carry bag and thereafter placing the whit coloured plastic carrying back in cloth carry bag, prepared a parcel. Then parcels of intoxicant tablets were sealed by I SI with my seal impression S.S. Sample seal was separately prepared. Seal after use was handed over to ASI Harjit Singh No.496/SGR. Then I SI took parcel of intoxicant tables duly sealed alongwith sample seal in police custody vide separate memo. Witnesses put their respective signature on the memo. Hence, Deepak Kumar has committed an offence under Section

22/61/85 NDPS Act by possessing intoxicant tablets. Thereafter, I SI typed ruqa for registration of case under Section 22/61/85 NDPS Act against Deepak Kumar son of Late Nand Lal, resident of Azad Nagar, at present Ravidas Nagar, Malerkotla in laptop and after getting it print the same is being sent to police station City-2 Malerkotla through C Tejvir Singh No.1992/SGR. After registration, case number be intimated. Special reports be issued. Control Room Malerkotla be informed. I am busy in investigation. Today in the area of Ravidas Nagar, Near Choti Eidgah, Malerkotla.'

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 as no independent witness was joined at the time of search of the petitioner and also it is highly improbable that petitioner would wait outside his house at night for the customers to sell the intoxicating tablets and therefore, submits that he has been falsely roped.

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, 5 months and 16 days.

Learned State Counsel on instructions from the Investigating Officer opposes the prayer for grant of regular bail stating that 1800 intoxicating tablets were recovered and the petitioner is a habitual offender as he is involved many other FIRs but is not in a



position to controvert the submissions made by learned counsel for the petitioner.

4. Analysis

Be that as it may, from the above discussion, it can be culled out that though 1800 tablets have been alleged to be recovered from the petitioner, there is gross violation of the mandate of Section 42 and 50 of NDPS Act wherein no independent witness was joined while making the search of the petitioner and the petitioner has already suffered sufficient incarceration i.e. 1 year, 5 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 15.01.2024 charges stands framed on 13.03.2024 out of 15 prosecution witnesses, only one PW 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 therefore, 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.

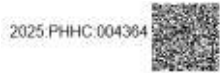
7. However, we should not be understood to mean that bail should be granted in every case. The grant or refusal of bail is entirely within the discretion of the judge hearing the matter and though that discretion is unfettered, it must be exercised judiciously and in a humane manner and compassionately. 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

14.01.2025
anuradha

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