



IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA AT
CHANDIGARH

224

CRM-M-5015-2025
DATE OF DECISION: 11.02.2025

AFRIDI

...PETITIONER

Versus

STATE OF PUNJAB

... RESPONDENT

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE SANDEEP MOUDGIL

Present: Mr. R.K. Gupta, 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 B.N.S.S for grant of regular bail in FIR No 03 dated 06.01.2024 U/s 22, 29 of NDPS Act, 1985 registered at P.S Division No.3, District Ludhiana.

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

‘Today I, ASI along with SC Harish Sharma No. 2424, CT Harmanveer Singh No. 1434 and PHG Balwant Singh No. 16111 in Government vehicle Ertiga No. PB 10-FV-5919 driven by PHG Surjit Singh No. 16825, having electronic kit and investigative bag for special checking of suspect men and suspicious vehicles. We were present at Nimwala Chowk, Ludhiana, for checking when secret informer came and informed that Sahil son of Sahib Singh son of Balwant Singh, resident of house number 563, street number 10. Mehta Road Maqbulpura Amritsar and Pawan Kumar son of Ashok Kumar son of Nand Lal resident of House No. 1100 Mohalla Bajara Police Station Division No. 3 Ludhiana who are addicted to drug and drug addiction and sell narcotic pills in different areas of Ludhiana city and who are still coming on foot from Shubhani Building towards Nimwala Chowk. If checking is done at the same



place by the way of picket, then Sahil son of Sahib Singh and Pawan Kumar son of Ashok Kumar can be caught with a large quantity of drug pills. This information is true and reliable. Accordingly, Sahil son of Sahib Singh and Pawan Kumar son of Ashok Kumar above mentioned have committed offence under section 22-61-85 NDPS Act by keeping narcotic pills in their possession. The crime 22-61-85 under the NDPS Act is sent to the police station of PHG Balwant Singh No. 16111 for registration of the case, the number should be made aware of the case. Special reports should be issued and sent to the service of Senior Officers Bala and District Magistrate. The control room should be informed and the mobile phone was also informed to the Chief Munshi police station regarding the sending of police officers if possible. Blockade at Nimwala Chowk with fellow employees present correct Gamdur Singh ASI Police Station Division No. 3 Ludhiana Date 06-01-2024 Extent: Nimmwala Chowk Ludhiana AT 04-50 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. He submits that the petitioner was roped in the present FIR on the basis of the disclosure statement made by co-accused and the alleged recovery was effected from co-accused Sahil and Pawan Kumar who were arrested from the spot. He further submits that nothing has been recovered from the petitioner, moreso, the antecedents of the petitioner are clean, meaning thereby he is not a habitual offender, therefore, prays for grant of regular bail to the petitioner.

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 and 29 days.

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 learned counsel for the petitioners.

4. Analysis

Be that as it may, from the above discussion, it can be culled out that the petitioner has already suffered sufficient incarceration i.e. 1 year and 29 days, antecedents of the petitioner are clean, meaning thereby he is not a habitual offender, nothing has been recovered from him, he was nominated on the basis of the disclosure statement made by co-accused, moreso, on the last date of hearing time was sought by State Counsel to file copy of challan but State has failed to file copy of challan and inference is to be drawn against the State on its failure. Moreso, 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 02.07.2024 charges are yet to be framed and total 14 prosecution witnesses are yet to be examined, 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.

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

11.02.2025

anuradha

Whether speaking/reasoned *Yes/No*

Whether reportable *Yes/No*