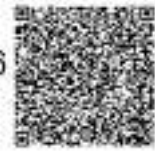


**IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA AT
CHANDIGARH**

2025:PHHC:023346



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CRM-M-9205-2025

Date of decision: 18.02.2025

Lovepreet Singh @ Labhi

...Petitioner

V/s

State of Punjab

...Respondent

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE SUMEET GOEL

Present: Mr. Lupil Gupta, Mr. Rahul & Mr. Hardeep Gandhi,
Advocates for the petitioner.

SUMEET GOEL, J. (Oral)

1. The present petition has been filed under Section 528 of BNSS of 2023 seeking quashing of the orders dated 03.06.2024 (Annexure P-3) passed by Judge Special Court, Bathinda vide which the bail granted to the petitioner stands cancelled and non-bailable warrants were issued against the petitioner as also order dated 04.01.2025 (Annexure P-4) passed by Judge Special Court, Bathinda whereby proclamation under Section 82 of Cr.P.C. was issued against the petitioner in FIR No.0016 dated 06.03.2024 registered under Sections 15(b) NDPS Act, 1985 at Police Station Nathana, District Bathinda.

2. Learned counsel for the petitioner has submitted that the petitioner appeared on each and every date. Learned counsel for the petitioner has further submitted that on 03.06.2024 the petitioner could not appear before the trial Court as he skipped the date. Learned Counsel for the petitioner has further iterated that the non-appearance of the petitioner on the said date was neither intentional nor wilful. However, the trial Court did not consider the

said aspect and wrongly cancelled the bail vide the impugned order and



summoned him through non-bailable warrants of arrest. Learned counsel for the petitioner has further submitted that now proclamation has been issued against the petitioner vide order dated 04.01.2025 (Annexure P-4) for 18.03.2025. Learned counsel asserts that the issuance of proclamation was harsh, disproportionate and contrary to the principles governing judicial discretion, particularly when the petitioner absence was justified and duly communicated to the Court. Learned counsel has contended that the procedure adopted by the learned Sessions Court in directly issuing the non-bailable warrants against the petitioner at the very first instance is contrary to the settled principles of criminal jurisprudence. It is well established position of law, as reiterated by the Hon'ble Supreme Court, that the Courts are required to adhere to due process while ensuring the presence of the accused. It has been submitted by the learned counsel that in the instant case, the learned trial Court has failed to issue any notice to the petitioner prior to resorting to the issuance of non-bailable warrants and hence such an approach is arbitrary, untenable and contrary to the procedural safeguard enshrined under the law. Learned counsel has further iterated that the petitioner unequivocally undertakes to enter appearance before the Sessions Court as also join the proceedings in accordance with law, the petitioner shall appear before the Sessions Court on each and every date of hearing and also cooperate therein, in accordance with law for a expeditious culmination of the trial.

3. Notice of motion.

4. Mr. Deepender Singh, Addl. AG, Punjab who is present in Court, accepts notice on behalf of the official respondent-State of Punjab. He has opposed the petition in hand by arguing that the allegations against the



petitioner are serious in nature, the petitioner has misused the concession of bail earlier extended to him by not appearing before the Sessions Court & no plausible explanation has been brought forth as to why the petitioner did not appear before the trial Court on the aforesaid date.

5. I have heard learned counsel for the rival parties and have perused the available record.

6. At this juncture, it would be apposite to refer herein to a judgment of the Hon'ble Supreme Court titled as ***Gudikanti Narasimhulu and others vs. Public Prosecutor, High Court of Andhra Pradesh AIR 1978 SUPREME COURT 429***, relevant whereof reads as under:

“10. The significance and sweep of Article 21 make the deprivation of liberty a matter of grave concern and permissible only when the law authorising it is reasonable, even-handed and geared to the goals of community good and State necessity spelt out in Article 19. Indeed, the considerations I have set out as criteria are germane to the constitutional proposition I have deduced. Reasonableness postulates intelligent care and predicates that deprivation of freedom- by refusal of bail is not for punitive purpose but for the bi-focal interests of justice-to the individual involved and society affected.

11. We must weigh the contrary factors to answer the test of reasonableness, subject to the need for securing the presence, of the bail applicant. It makes sense to assume that a man on bail has a better chance to prepare or present his case than one remanded in custody. And if public justice is to be promoted, mechanical detention should be close to ours, the function of bail is limited, 'community roots' of the, applicant are stressed and, after the Vera Foundation's Manhattan Bail Project, monetary suretyship is losing ground. The considerable public expense in keeping in custody where no danger of disappearance or disturbance can arise, is not a negligible consideration. Equally important is the deplorable condition, verging on. the inhuman, of our sub-jails, that the unrewarding cruelty and expensive custody of avoidable incarceration makes refusal of bail unreasonable and a Policy favouring release justly sensible.

12. A few other weighty factors deserve reference. All deprivation of liberty is validated by social defence and individual correction along an



anti-criminal direction. Public justice is central to the whole scheme of bail law. Fleeing justice must be forbidden but punitive harshness should be minimised. Restorative devices to redeem the man, even, through community service, meditative drill, study classes or other resources should be innovated, and playing foul with public peace by tampering with evidence, intimidating witnesses or committing offence while on judicially sanctioned 'free enterprise,' should be provided against. No seeker of justice shall play confidence tricks on the court or community. Thus, conditions may be hung around bail orders, not to cripple but to protect. Such is the holistic jurisdiction and humanistic orientation invoked by the judicial discretion correlated to the values of our constitution.”

6.1. Further, the Hon’ble Supreme Court in a judgment titled as ***Gurcharan Singh vs. State (UT of Delhi) 1978 (1) SCC 118***, has held as under:-

*“Where the granting of bail lies within the discretion of the **court**, the granting or denial is regulated, to a large extent, by the facts and circumstances of each particular case. Since the object of the detention or imprisonment of the accused is to secure his appearance and submission to the jurisdiction and the judgment of the **court**, the primary inquiry is whether a recognizance or bond would effect that end.”*

6.2. Furthermore, the Hon’ble Supreme Court in a judgment titled as ***Sanjay Chandra vs. CBI (2012) 1 SCC 40***, has held as under:

“21. In bail applications, generally, it has been laid down from the earliest times that the object of bail is to secure the appearance of the accused person at his trial by reasonable amount of bail. The object of bail is neither punitive nor preventative. Deprivation of liberty must be considered a punishment, unless it can be required to ensure that an accused person will stand his trial when called upon. The courts owe more than verbal respect to the principle that punishment begins after conviction, and that every man is deemed to be innocent until duly tried and duly found guilty.

22. From the earliest times, it was appreciated that detention in custody pending completion of trial could be a cause of great hardship. From time to time, necessity demands that some un-convicted persons should be held in custody pending trial to secure their attendance at the trial but in such



cases, “necessity” is the operative test. In this country, it would be quite contrary to the concept of personal liberty enshrined in the Constitution that any person should be punished in respect of any matter, upon which, he has not been convicted or that in any circumstances, he should be deprived of his liberty upon only the belief that he will tamper with the witnesses if left at liberty, save in the most extraordinary circumstances.”

7. A perusal of the record reveals that the petitioner was released on bail on 08.04.2024 and there is nothing forthcoming from the records or the impugned order dated 03.06.2024 that non-appearance on the part of the petitioner was deliberate or to evade the process of the Court. In the considered opinion of this Court, issuance of non-bailable warrants in the first instance amounts to an unjustifiable restriction on the procedural rights of the petitioner in the absence of any misconduct, lack of bona fides, or a deliberate attempt to evade the proceedings on his behalf. The issuance of proclamation must not be exercised in a mechanical manner. It must be adopted sparingly and only upon recording cogent reasons that reflect the necessity of such a stringent course.

8. Keeping in view the entirety of the facts and circumstances of the case; especially the factum of the prime objective of cancellation of bail and forfeiture of bail bonds being securing the presence of the accused, the petitioner-accused having come forward himself to face trial, the willingness shown by the petitioner-accused to appear before the trial Court on each and every date in accordance with law, the petitioner having submitted that he shall cooperate for an expeditious culmination of the trial and there being no tangible material brought forward to indicate the likelihood of the petitioner to interfere with the prosecution evidence; this Court is of the considered opinion that the petition in hand deserves to be allowed.

9. It is, thus, directed as follows:
- (i) The impugned orders dated 03.06.2024 (Annexure P-3) and 04.01.2025 (Annexure P-4) passed by the Judge Special Court, Bathinda is set-aside subject to the petitioner appearing before the trial Court on or before 18.03.2025 i.e. the next date of hearing fixed in the said Court & shall furnish an undertaking that the petitioner shall continue to appear before the trial/concerned Court on each and every date of hearing. Apart from the aforesaid condition(s), the petitioner shall also surrender his passport before the trial/concerned Court. It is clarified that the trial/concerned Court shall be at liberty to impose such other condition(s) upon the petitioner, as deemed appropriate by it in the facts and circumstances of the case.
- (ii) The petitioner shall deposit costs of Rs.20,000/- with the Punjab and Haryana High Court Employees Welfare Association. It is clarified that payment of the aforesaid costs and production of receipt/proof thereof before the trial/concerned Court shall be condition precedent. In absence of deposit of such costs, the present petition would be deemed to be dismissed without any further reference to the Bench.
- (iii) Pending application(s), if any, stands disposed of.

(SUMEET GOEL)
JUDGE

February 18, 2025
Naveen

Whether speaking/reasoned:	Yes/No
Whether reportable:	Yes/No