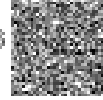


245

2025.PHHC:028646



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

**CRM-M-9675-2025 (O&M)
DECIDED ON: 28.02.2025**

HARPAL ALIAS BONA

.....PETITIONER

VERSUS

STATE OF HARYANA

.....RESPONDENT

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE SANDEEP MOUDGIL

Present: Mr. Tarun Hooda, Advocate
for the petitioner.

Mr. Surender Singh Pannu, Addl. AG, Haryana.

SANDEEP MOUDGIL, J (ORAL)

CRM-7179-2025

Application is allowed, as prayed for.

CRM-M-9675-2025

1. Relief Sought

The jurisdiction of this Court under Section 483 of BNSS, 2023 has been invoked for grant of regular bail to the petitioner in case FIR No. 191, dated 02.04.2024, under Sections 15 (b) of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985 (hereinafter referred to as 'the Act') (Section 27-A and 29 of NDPS Act, 1985 added later on), registered at Police Station City Tohana.

2. **Facts**

Briefly stated, the case of prosecution is that on 02.04.2024, a police party headed by ASI Kapil Dev, on the basis of secret information, apprehended co-accused Simran wife of Madan Lal and recovery of 04 kg. 500 grams Poppy-husk (Kachra Doda Post) was effected from her, in the presence of Sh. Love Kumar, ETO, Fatehabad. On this, present case was registered. During investigation, co-accused Simran wife of Madan Lal was arrested, who, on interrogation, suffered disclosure-statement regarding her involvement in the crime and further disclosed that she had purchased the recovered contraband from accused Harpal Singh, who is yet to be arrested.

3. **Contentions**

On behalf of the petitioner:

Learned counsel for the petitioner contends that there is an unexplained delay in lodging the FIR and *prima-facie* offence under Section 15 (b), 24-A and 29 of the NDPS is not made out. It is further contended that whatever recovery of the alleged contraband i.e. 4kg 500 grams of Poppy husk, has been effected from the main accused Simran, who has already been granted the concession of regular bail vide order dated 09.07.2024 (Annexure P-1) passed by this Court in CRM-M-21751-2024. It is submitted on behalf of the petitioner that he has been nominated as an accused only on the basis disclosure statement suffered by the main accused whose disclosure has been obtained by the police while in custody, which has no evidentiary value in the eyes of law. Apart from that the alleged contraband if at all recovered from the co-accused is non-commercial in nature.

Notice of motion.

On behalf of respondent-State

Learned State counsel submits that there is no delay in registration of FIR as it was registered on the same day of the recovery of the alleged contra-band and the main accused Simran was also apprehended on that very day. However, apart from that, learned counsel could not controvert the fact that the recovery whatsoever, has been effected from the co-accused namely Simran on whose disclosure statement he has been nominated as an accused. He also points out that the petitioner is also involved in other cases.

4. Analysis

Considering the custody period undergone by the petitioner i.e., 2 months and 12 days, recovery was effected from the main accused, who has already been granted the concession of regular bail by this Court added with the fact that investigation is complete, challan stands presented on 07.01.2025, charges have been framed on 15.01.2025 and out of total 15 prosecution witnesses, none have been examined so far, meaning thereby conclusion of trial shall take considerable time, no useful purpose would be served by keeping the petitioner behind bars for uncertain period, wherein “*bail is a rule and jail is an exception*” and it would also violate the principle of right to speedy trial and expeditious disposal under Article 21 of 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

28.02.2025

Meenu

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