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2025:PHHC:112888



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IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA AT CHANDIGARH

CRM-M-42397-2025

Date of decision: August 26, 2025

Lovepreet Singh @ Labbu

....Petitioner

versus

State of Punjab

....Respondent

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE SUMEET GOEL

Present:- Mr. Sahil Kumar, Advocate for the petitioner.

Mr. Jaypreet Singh, DAG Punjab.

SUMEET GOEL, J. (ORAL)

1. Present petition has been filed under Section 483 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 (for short 'BNSS') for grant of regular bail to the petitioner in case bearing FIR No.19 dated 11.03.2025, registered for the offences punishable under Sections 22, 25, 29-61/85 of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985 (for short 'NDPS Act'), at Police Station Rureke Kalan, District Barnala.

2. The gravamen of the FIR in question is that the petitioner is an accused of being involved in an FIR pertaining to NDPS Act involving 01 cut strip of intoxicant tablets, containing 8 tablets labeled 'ETIWILL-0.5 MD' (Etizolam Mouth Dissolving Tablets 0.5 mg) and 8 cut strips of intoxicant capsules, labeled 'SIGNORE' (Pregabalin Capsules IP), each strip containing 5 capsules (40 numbers in total), allegedly recovered from him.

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3. Learned counsel for the petitioner has argued that the petitioner is in custody since 11.03.2025. Learned counsel has iterated that the petitioner has been falsely implicated into the FIR in question. Learned counsel has further iterated that mandatory provisions of the NDPS Act have not scrupulously been complied with, and thus, the prosecution case suffers from inherent defects. Learned counsel has iterated that alleged recovery from the petitioner is intermediate in nature, and thus, rigors of Section 37 of the NDPS Act would not apply. Learned counsel has further iterated that the petitioner has been falsely implicated into the FIR in question. Thus, regular bail is prayed for.

4. Learned State counsel has opposed the present petition by arguing that the allegations raised against the petitioner are serious in nature and, thus, he does not deserve the concession of the regular bail. Learned State counsel seeks to place on record custody certificate dated 25.08.2025 in Court, which is taken on record.

5. I have heard counsel for the rival parties and have gone through the available records of the case.

6. The petitioner was arrested on 11.03.2025 whereinafter investigation was carried out and the challan was presented on 08.05.2025. Total 15 prosecution witnesses have been cited, but none has been examined till date. It is not in dispute that contraband alleged to be recovered from the petitioner is of intermediate quantity and hence, bar under Section 37 of the NDPS Act would not apply. The rival contentions raised at Bar give rise to debatable issues, which shall be ratiocinated upon during the course of trial. This Court does not deem it appropriate to delve deep into these rival contentions, at this stage, lest it may prejudice the trial. Nothing tangible has

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been brought forward to indicate the likelihood of the petitioner absconding from the process of justice or interfering with the prosecution evidence.

6.1. In the factual milieu of the case, this Court is of the considered opinion that fetters of Section 37 of the NDPS Act have been met with so as to enlarge the petitioner on bail. It would be apposite to refer a judgment of this Court in *Jaswinder Singh alias Kala versus State of Punjab* passed in **CRM-M-33729-2025 (2025:PHHC:089161)**; the relevant whereof reads thus:

“14. As a sequitur to above-said rumination, the following postulates emerge:

(I) (i) A bail plea on merits; in respect of an FIR under NDPS Act of 1985 involving offence(s) under Section 19 or Section 24 or Section 27-A thereof and for offence(s) involving commercial quantity; is essentially required to meet with the rigour(s) of Section 37 of NDPS Act.

(ii) The rigour(s) of Section 37 of NDPS Act do not apply to a bail plea(s) on medical ground(s), interim bail on account of any exigency including the reason of demise of a close family relative etc.

(iii) The rigour(s) of Section 37 of NDPS Act pale into oblivion when bail is sought for on account of long incarceration in view of Article 21 of the Constitution of India i.e. where the bail-applicant has suffered long under-trial custody, the trial is procrastinating and folly thereof is not attributable to such bail-applicant.

II. The twin conditions contained in Section 37(1)(b) of NDPS Act are in addition to the conditions/parameters contained in Cr.P.C./BNSS or any other applicable extant law.

III. The twin conditions contained in Section 37(1)(b) of NDPS Act are cumulative in nature and not alternative i.e. both the conditions are required to be satisfied for a bail-plea to be successful.

IV. For consideration by bail Court of the condition stipulated in Section 37(1)(b)(i) of NDPS Act i.e. “there are reasonable grounds for believing that he is not guilty of such offence”:

(i) The bail Court ought to sift through all relevant material, including case-dairy, exclusively for the limited purpose of adjudicating such bail plea.

(ii) Such consideration, concerning the assessment of guilt or innocence, should not mirror the same degree of scrutiny required for an acquittal of the accused at the final adjudication & culmination of trial.

(iii) Plea(s) of defence by applicant-accused, if any, including material/documents in support thereof, may be looked into by the bail-Court while adjudicating such bail plea.

V. *For consideration of the condition stipulated in Section 37(1)(b)(ii) i.e. 'he is not likely to commit any offence while on bail':*

(i) The word 'likely' ought to be interpreted as requiring a demonstrable and substantial probability of re-offending by the bail-applicant, rather than a mere theoretical one, as no Court can predict future conduct of the bail-applicant.

(ii) The entire factual matrix of a given case including the antecedents of the bail-applicant, role ascribed to him, and the nature of offence are required to be delved into. However, the involvement of bail-applicant in another NDPS/other offence cannot ipso facto result in the conclusion of his propensity for committing offence in the future.

(iii) The bail-Court may, at the time of granting bail, impose upon the applicant-accused a condition that he would submit, at such regular time period/interval as may stipulated by the Court granting bail, an affidavit before concerned Special Judge of NDPS Court/Illaq (Jurisdictional) Judicial Magistrate/concerned Police Station, to the effect that he has not been involved in commission of any offence after being released on bail. In the facts of a given case, imposition of such condition may be considered to be sufficient for satisfaction of condition enumerated in Section 37(1)(b)(ii).

VI. *There is no gainsaying that the nature, mode and extent of exercise of power by a Court; while satisfying itself regarding the conditions stipulated in Section 37 of NDPS Act; shall depend upon the judicial discretion exercised by such Court in the facts and circumstances of a given case. No exhaustive guidelines can possibly be laid down as to what would constitute parameters for satisfaction of requirement under Section 37 (ibid) as every case has its own unique facts/circumstances. Making such an attempt is nothing but a utopian endeavour. Ergo, this issue is best left to the judicial wisdom and discretion of the Court dealing with such matter."*

6.2. As per custody certificate dated 25.08.2025 filed by the learned State counsel, the petitioner has already suffered incarceration for a period of 05 months and 13 days. Further, as per the said custody certificate the petitioner is stated to be involved in other FIR(s). However, this factum cannot be a ground sufficient by itself, to decline the concession of regular bail to the

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petitioner in the FIR in question when a case is made out for grant of regular bail *qua* the FIR in question by ratiocinating upon the facts/circumstances of the said FIR. Reliance in this regard can be placed upon the judgment of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in *Maulana Mohd. Amir Rashadi v. State of U.P. and another*, 2012 (1) RCR (Criminal) 586; a Division Bench judgment of the Hon'ble Calcutta High Court in case of *Sridhar Das v. State*, 1998 (2) RCR (Criminal) 477 & judgments of this Court in CRM-M No.38822-2022 titled as *Akhilesh Singh v. State of Haryana*, decided on 29.11.2021, and *Balraj v. State of Haryana*, 1998 (3) RCR (Criminal) 191.

Suffice to say, further detention of the petitioner as an undertrial is not warranted in the facts and circumstances of the case.

7. In view of above, the present petition is allowed. Petitioner is ordered to be released on regular bail on his furnishing bail/surety bonds to the satisfaction of the Ld. concerned trial Court/Duty Magistrate. However, in addition to conditions that may be imposed by the concerned trial Court/Duty Magistrate, the petitioner shall remain bound by the following conditions:

- (i) The petitioner shall not mis-use the liberty granted.
- (ii) The petitioner shall not tamper with any evidence, oral or documentary, during the trial.
- (iii) The petitioner shall not absent himself on any date before the trial.
- (iv) The petitioner shall not commit any offence while on bail.
- (v) The petitioner shall deposit his passport, if any, with the trial Court.
- (vi) The petitioner shall give his cellphone number to the Investigating Officer/SHO of concerned Police Station and shall not change his cell-phone number without prior permission of the trial Court/Illaq Magistrate.
- (vii) The petitioner shall not in any manner try to delay the trial.
- (viii) The petitioner shall submit, on the first working day of every month, an affidavit, before the concerned trial Court, to the effect that he has not been involved in commission of any offence after being released on bail. In case the petitioner is found to be involved in any offence after his being enlarged on bail in the present FIR, on the basis of

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his affidavit or otherwise, the State is mandated to move, forthwith, for cancellation of his bail which plea, but of course, shall be ratiocinated upon merits thereof.

8. In case of breach of any of the aforesaid conditions and those which may be imposed by concerned trial Court/Duty Magistrate as directed hereinabove or upon showing any other sufficient cause, the State/complainant shall be at liberty to move cancellation of bail of the petitioner.

9. Ordered accordingly.

10. Nothing said hereinabove shall be construed as an expression of opinion on the merits of the case.

11. Since the main case has been decided, pending miscellaneous application, if any, shall also stands disposed off.

(SUMEET GOEL)
JUDGE

August 26, 2025
mahavir

Whether speaking/reasoned: Yes/No

Whether reportable: Yes/No