

IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA
AT CHANDIGARH

CRM-M-58294-2024
Reserved on: 10.01.2025
Pronounced on: 21.01.2025

Kirtapl Singh @ Kirti ...Petitioner

Versus

State of Punjab ...Respondent

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE ANOOP CHITKARA

Present: Mr. Satnam Singh Gill, Advocate
for the petitioner.

Mr. Jasjit Singh, D.A.G., Punjab.

ANOOP CHITKARA, J.

FIR No.	Dated	Police Station	Sections
72	02.08.2020	Dharamgarh, District Sangrur	22/29 of NDPS Act

1. The petitioner incarcerated in the FIR captioned above had come up before this Court under Section 483 of Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023, [BNSS], seeking regular bail.

2. Para no.20 of the bail petition reads as under:-

“20. That except for present case no other case has ever been registered against the petitioner and nor pending against him. He has not been declared proclaimed offender in any case.”

3. However, it is totally contrary to the cases mentioned in the custody certificate. Even in para no.6 of the status report, it has been mentioned that petitioner has no criminal history. Per custody certificate dated 09.01.2025, the accused has the following criminal antecedents:-

Sr. No.	FIR No.	Date	Offenses	Police Station
1.	87	15.05.2024	52-A of Prisons Act	City-1 Sangrur
2.	08	05.01.2023	353, 186, 506 IPC	City-1 Sangrur
3.	121	19.06.2023	52-A of Prisons Act	City-1 Sangrur
4.	198	15.10.2018	341, 332, 353, 186, 506, 34, 120-B IPC	Lehra

4. Although in normal course of things, this Court would have dismissed the petition

for non-disclosure of criminal history, but keeping in view the custody of 04 years and 05 months as on date, this Court is not drawing any adverse inference for not disclosing the criminal antecedents.

5. The facts and allegations are taken from the status report filed by the State. On Aug 02, 2020, based on prior information, the Police seized 1500 tablets of Clovidol, containing Tramadol, from the petitioner's possession. The Investigator claims to have complied with all the statutory requirements of the NDPS Act, 1985, and CrPC, 1973.

6. The petitioner's counsel prays for bail by imposing any stringent conditions and contends that further pre-trial incarceration would cause an irreversible injustice to the petitioner and their family.

7. The State's counsel opposes bail and refers to the status report.

8. Para 3 of the status report reads as follows:

"3. That during the investigation S.I. Narinder Singh SHO, P.S. Dharamgarh held a nakabandi and in the meantime, one person was seen coming on the left side of road holding black color envelope in his left side, who on seeing the police party got perplexed and threw the polythene envelope on the ground and strips of intoxicant tablets were scattered on the ground and he was apprehended and asked about his name and address, who disclosed his name as Kiratpal Singh @ Kirti son of Sukhwinder Singh son of Balvir Singh resident of ward no. 10 Lehra P.S. Lehra. On counting, 150 strips each containing 10 tablets total 1500 intoxicant tablets marka Clovidol 100-SR having batch No. TVD- 20194, MFG. JUN-2020, EXP, MAY-2023 were recovered. Then parcel was prepared and sealed by S.I. Narinder Singh with his seal bearing impression NS and specimen of seals were prepared separately and the said parcel alongwith specimen of seals were taken into possession. Accused Kiratpal Singh @ Kirti was arrested at the spot. Then S.I. Narinder Singh alongwith police party and accused Kiratpal Singh @ Kirti started nakabandi at canal bridge leading from Rattangarh Patialvi towards Kanakwal Bhanguan and from the side of village Kanakwal Bhanguan one person was seen coming on scooty bearing no. PB75A 0342 make activa white color, holding polythene envelope black color on the handle of scooty, who on seeing the police party got perplexed and threw the polythene envelope on the ground and strips of intoxicant tablets were scattered on the ground and he was apprehended and asked about his name and address, who disclosed his name as Harjeet Singh @ Geeta son of Harbans Singh son of Hazara Singh resident of KotheKashmesh Nagar Hariyau, P.S. Lehra. On counting, 200 strips each containing 10 tablets total 2000 intoxicant tablets marka Clovidol 100-SR having batch No. TVD-20194, MFG. JUN-2020, EXP, MAY-2023 were recovered. Then parcel was prepared and sealed by S.I. Narinder Singh with his seal bearing impression NS and specimen of seals were prepared separately and the said parcel alongwith specimen of

seals and above said scooty were taken into possession. Accused Harjeet Singh Geeta was arrested at the spot.

On 03.08.2020 both the accused and two parcels containing 1500 intoxicant tablets and another one containing 2000 intoxicant tablets marka Clovidol 100-SR duly sealed with seals NS were produced before the Court of Komple Dhanjal Ld. JMIC, Sunam and the Ld. Magistrate after breaking the previous seals both the bulk parcels were re-sealed with the seal of Court bearing impression KD and both bulk parcels were ordered to be sent to the FSL, for analysis. Both the bulk parcels duly sealed with seals KD were sent to FSL on 11.08.2020. As per FSL report No. 1864/2020/Toxi/FSL/Pb, dated 28.10.2020 the ingredient found present in the parcels was reported as under:-

<i>Tramadol Hydrochloride</i>	<i>Found present in the tablets contained in the parcels No.1 and 2</i>
<i>Average quantity</i>	<i>Parcel No.1 = 99.63 mg/tablet</i>
	<i>Parcel No.2 = 99.65 mg/tablet</i>

The recovery of 3500 intoxicant tablets effected in this case from both the accused falls within the ambit of commercial quantity.”

9. Para 3 of the reply reproduces the FSL report, which states that the tablets contained Tramadol Hydrochloride and had an average weight of 99.63 grams.
10. Prosecution case reveals that initially 1500 tablets were recovered from the petitioner and later on 2000 intoxicant tablets were recovered from co-accused Harjit Singh. Although tablets were recovered separately, but the Investigator has clubbed them together. On the face of it, when the tablets were recovered separately, thus could not have been clubbed, however this observation is only for the purpose of bail and it shall be permissible for counsel for the petitioner to raise this legal submission at the time of trial. Even if this Court presumes that entire 3500 intoxicant tablets were recovered from the joint possession, still petitioner is in custody for more than 04 years and 05 months and considering the custody, even criminal antecedents would not stand as a ground to refuse or deny bail.
11. Given this, the rigors of S. 37 of the NDPS Act apply in the present case. The petitioner must satisfy the twin conditions put in place by the Legislature under Section 37 of the NDPS Act.
12. Given this, the criminal antecedents are also not legal grounds for denying the rigors of S. 37 of the NDPS Act at this stage.
13. However, the petitioner is entitled to bail because Hon’ble Supreme Court had granted bail on prolonged custody in the following judicial precedents:

- 1) In Junaid Alam v. State of Uttarakhand, decided on 12 Aug 2024, SLP(Crl.) 7708-2024, Hon'ble Supreme Court holds,

[2]. It is pointed out that the petitioner has been in custody for last more than 18 months since he was arrested on 25.01.2023. It is then submitted that only 3 out of the 10 cited prosecution witnesses have been examined and they have not said anything to connect the petitioner with the crime.

[3]. The learned counsel for the State would submit that the concerned Contraband are medicinal drugs but they are sold for profit. Moreover, it is of commercial quantity.

[4]. We have perused the nature of the Contraband i.e., the prohibited medicines (SYP Codectus 100 Bottles (100 Ml each), Cap Pyeevon Spas Plus 720 Cap Parvion Spas 800 Capsules, Spasonof NF 960 capsules, Capsules Spasmoproxyvon Plus 144, Proxywell Spas 2568 Capsules, Alprasaft Table 600 Tablets, Pyeevon Spas Plus 32 Capsules).

[5]. Having considered the above and the fact that the trial is unlikely to conclude on a near date, we are of the view that the petitioner – Junaid Alam deserves to be granted bail. It is ordered accordingly. Appropriate bail conditions be imposed by the trial court.

14. The prolonged incarceration, generally militates against the most precious fundamental right guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution and in such a situation, the conditional liberty must override the statutory embargo created under Section 37(1)(b)(ii) of the NDPS Act¹.

15. In Tajmul SK v. The State of West Bengal, decided on 23 Jul 2024, CrA 3047-2024, Hon'ble Supreme Court holds,

[5]. We are inclined to set aside the impugned order only on the premise that right to speedy trial is a fundamental right. Despite the fact that the appellant has been under incarceration for more than one and a half years, the trial is yet to start, though, it is submitted by learned counsel appearing for the State that charges have been framed. Suffice it is to state that trial would take considerable length of time. There is no antecedent involving the appellant.

[6]. Accordingly, the impugned order is set aside and the appellant is granted bail, subject to the conditions that may be imposed by the Trial Court.

16. Given the above, the petitioner's pretrial custody is more than some of the judicial precedents mentioned above; the petitioner is entitled to bail under Article 14 of the Constitution of India.

17. Per the custody certificate dated 09.01.2025, the petitioner's custody in this FIR is 04 years, 05 months and 03 days. Given the drugs were medicines that attracted violation

¹ Supreme Court of India, in Rabi Prakash v. The State of Odisha, SLP (Crl) 4169-2023, Para 4, decided on 13 July 2023

of S. 22 of NDPS Act, viz-a-viz pre-trial custody, coupled with the prima facie analysis of the nature of allegations and the other factors peculiar to this case, there would be no justifiability for further pre-trial incarceration at this stage.

18. Without commenting on the case's merits, in the facts and circumstances peculiar to this case, and for the reasons mentioned above, the petitioner makes a case for bail. This order shall come into force from the time it is uploaded on this Court's official webpage.

19. Given above, provided the petitioner is not required in any other case, the petitioner shall be released on bail in the FIR captioned above subject to furnishing bonds to the satisfaction of the concerned Court and due to unavailability before any nearest Ilaqa Magistrate/duty Magistrate. Before accepting the surety, the concerned Court must be satisfied that if the accused fails to appear, such surety can produce the accused.

20. While furnishing a personal bond, the petitioner shall mention the following personal identification details:

1.	AADHAR number	
2.	Passport number (If available) and when the attesting officer/court considers it appropriate or considers the accused a flight risk.	
3.	Mobile number (If available)	
4.	E-Mail id (If available)	

21. This order is subject to the petitioner's complying with the following terms.

22. The petitioner shall abide by all statutory bond conditions and appear before the concerned Court(s) on all dates. The petitioner shall not tamper with the evidence, influence, browbeat, pressurize, induce, threaten, or promise, directly or indirectly, any witnesses, Police officials, or any other person acquainted with the facts and circumstances of the case or dissuade them from disclosing such facts to the Police or the Court.

23. Given the background of allegations against the petitioner, it becomes paramount to protect the drug detection squad, their family members, as well as the members of society, and incapacitating the accused would be one of the primary options until the filing of the closure report or discharge, or acquittal. Consequently, it would be appropriate to restrict the possession of firearm(s). [This restriction is being imposed based on the preponderance of evidence of probability and not of evidence of certainty, i.e., beyond reasonable doubt; and as such, it is not to be construed as an intermediate sanction]. Given the nature of the allegations and the other circumstances peculiar to this case, the petitioner shall surrender all weapons, firearms, and ammunition, if any, along with the arms license to the concerned authority within fifteen days from release from prison and inform the Investigator about the compliance. However, subject to the Indian

Arms Act, 1959, the petitioner shall be entitled to renew and take it back in case of acquittal in this case, provided otherwise permissible in the concerned rules. Restricting firearms would instill confidence in the victim(s), their families, and society; it would also restrain the accused from influencing the witnesses and repeating the offense.

24. The conditions mentioned above imposed by this court are to endeavor to reform and ensure the accused does not repeat the offense and also to block the menace of drug abuse. In Mohammed Zubair v. State of NCT of Delhi, 2022:INSC:735 [Para 28], Writ Petition (Criminal) No 279 of 2022, Para 29, decided on July 20, 2022, A Three-Judge bench of Hon'ble Supreme Court holds that "The bail conditions imposed by the Court must not only have a nexus to the purpose that they seek to serve but must also be proportional to the purpose of imposing them. The courts, while imposing bail conditions must balance the liberty of the accused and the necessity of a fair trial. While doing so, conditions that would result in the deprivation of rights and liberties must be eschewed."

25. In Md. Tajiur Rahaman v. The State of West Bengal, decided on 08-Nov-2024, SLP (Crl) 12225-2024, Hon'ble Supreme Court holds in Para 7, "It goes without saying that if the petitioner is found involved in such like offence in future, the concession of bail granted to him today will liable to be withdrawn and the petitioner is bound to face the necessary consequences."

26. This bail is conditional, and the foundational condition is that if the petitioner indulges in any non-bailable offense, the State shall file an application for cancellation of this bail before the Sessions Court, which shall be at liberty to cancel this bail.

27. Any observation made hereinabove is neither an expression of opinion on the case's merits nor shall the trial Court advert to these comments.

28. A certified copy of this order would not be needed for furnishing bonds, and any Advocate for the Petitioner can download this order along with case status from the official web page of this Court and attest it to be a true copy. If the attesting officer wants to verify its authenticity, such an officer can also verify its authenticity and may download and use the downloaded copy for attesting bonds.

29. Petition allowed in terms mentioned above. All pending applications, if any, stand disposed of.

(ANOOP CHITKARA)
JUDGE

21.01.2025

Jyoti Sharma

Whether speaking/reasoned: Yes

Whether reportable: No.