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

CRM-M-60515-2024

Date of decision: 28.07.2025

Gurwinder Singh

....Petitioner

Versus

State of Punjab

...Respondent

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE HARPREET SINGH BRAR**Present:** Mr. Satnam Singh Gill, Advocate
for the petitioner.

Mr. Sandeep Kumar, DAG, Punjab.

HARPREET SINGH BRAR, J. (ORAL)

1. This is second petition filed under Section 483 of Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 seeking regular bail in case bearing FIR No.17 dated 28.01.2023 under Section 22 of the NDPS Act (Section 29 of the NDPS Act added later on) registered at Police Station Sadar Samana, District Patiala. Earlier petition was withdrawn on 06.08.2024.

2. The FIR (*supra*) was registered on the basis of secret information that the accused/petitioner and Pappu Ram who are engaged in selling narcotics in huge quantity were on motorcycle bearing registration No. PB 23V 1520 and selling intoxicant tablets at bus stand of village Sahpur and the information was found credible and correct and on the basis of the alleged recovery, the FIR (*supra*) was registered.

3. Learned counsel for the petitioner submits that the present petition has been filed with the changed circumstances as the similarly situated co-accused, namely, Pappu Ram @ Papu Ram, has been granted the concession of regular bail by the Coordinate Bench of this Court vide order dated 20.05.2025 passed in CRM-M-26249-2025 titled as 'Pappu Ram @ Papu Ram Vs. State of



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Punjab'. He further submits that the FIR (*supra*) was registered on the allegation that 2200 tablets of Tramadol have been recovered from the petitioner. Further, the case of the petitioner is squarely covered by the judgment of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in ***Nandlal Mondal @ Abhay Mondal Vs. The State of West Bengal SLP (Crl.) No(s).12788/2023*** and the petitioner has suffered incarceration of 02 years, 05 months and 25 days and till date, out of 22 prosecution witnesses, only 09 witnesses have been examined. The petitioner is not involved in any other case.

4. The learned State counsel has filed custody certificate in the Court today which is taken on record and per contra, opposes the grant of regular bail to the petitioner on the ground that 2200 tablets of Tramadol have been recovered from the conscious possession of the petitioner and his complicity in the present case is duly established and thus, he is not entitled to any relief. However, he could not controvert the fact that the petitioner is behind the bars for the last 02 years, 05 months and 25 days and only 09 prosecution witnesses have been examined so far.

5. A two Judge Bench of Hon'ble Supreme Court in '***Satender Kumar Antil v. CBI***' (2022) 10 SCC 51, with respect to prevailing conditions of undertrial prisoner in India has observed:

"6. Jails in India are flooded with undertrial prisoners. The statistics placed before us would indicate that more than 2/3rd of the inmates of the prisons constitute undertrial prisoners. Of this category of prisoners, majority may not even be required to be arrested despite registration of a cognizable offence, being charged with offences punishable for seven years or less. They are not only poor and illiterate but also would include women. Thus, there is a culture of offence being inherited by many of them. As observed by this Court, it certainly exhibits the mindset, a vestige of colonial India, on the part of the investigating agency, notwithstanding the fact arrest is a draconian measure resulting in curtailment of liberty, and thus to be used sparingly. In a democracy, there can never be an impression that it is a police State as both are conceptually opposite to each other."



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6. After perusing the record of the case with the assistance of the learned State counsel, it transpires that the petitioner is behind the bars since 31.01.2023. Investigation is complete. The final report under Section 173 Cr.P.C. was presented before the concerned Court and trial of the case has not made much progress as only 09 witnesses out of 22 prosecution witnesses have been examined so far.

7. A two Judge bench of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in *Nandlal Mondal @ Abhay Mondal (supra)* released the accused on bail after completion of 18 months of custody on account of protracted trial in NDPS case involving commercial quantity of contraband. Reliance in this regard can also be placed upon the judgments rendered by the Hon'ble Supreme Court passed in *Md. Aliul Islam @ Aliul Islam @ Alius Vs. The State of West Bengal SLP (Crl.) No. 000736/2024*, *Debrata Mondal Vs. State of West Bengal SLP(Crl.) No. 14970-2023*, *Santarul Islam @ Santa Vs. The State of West Bengal SLP(Crl.) No. 13169/2023*, *Indrajit Mondal @ Piglu Vs. The State of West Bengal SLP(Crl.) No. 8512/2023*, *Narjul Islam @ Najbul Hoque Vs. The State of West Bengal SLP(Crl.) No. 14172/2023*, *Subhashri Das @ Rana @ Subhoshree Vs. The State of West Bengal SLP(Crl.) No.15284/2023*, *Mithun Sk. & Anr. Vs. The State of West Bengal SLP (Crl.) No.016598/2023*, *SK. Nasiruddin @ Nasirddin SK. Vs. State of West Bengal SLP (Crl.) No.003402/2024*, *Indadul Shah Vs. The State of West Bengal SLP(Crl.) No. 12670/2023*, *Hanef Kharsani @ Hanef Sheikh Vs. Union of India, Ripon Seikh & Ors. Vs. State of West Bengal SLP(Crl.) No. 16663/2023*, *Moidul Sarkar Vs. The State of West Bengal SLP(Crl.) No. 15668/ 2023*, *Saniya Bibi @ Soniya Bibi Vs. The State of West Bengal SLP(Crl.) No. 2354/2024*,



Saddam Hossain Vs. State of West Bengal SLP(Crl.) No. 15496/2023, Bijon SK @ Golam Murselim Vs. The State of West Bengal SLP (Crl.) No. 6046/2024 and Subhas Vs. The State of West Bengal SLP(Crl.) No. 8823/2019.

8. Further, the culpability, if any, would be determined at the time of trial and as such, no useful purpose will be served by further detention of the petitioner-accused. Keeping the petitioner in further detention without the prospect of the trial being concluded in the near future, would be violative of his rights under Article 21 of the Constitution of India. A two Judge bench of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in *Mohd. Muslim @ Hussain vs. State (NCT of Delhi) 2023 AIR SC 1648*, has held that the concept of fairness enshrined under Article 21 of the Constitution of India would trump the bar on granting bail in cases involving commercial quantity of contraband, as stipulated by Section 37 of the NDPS Act. Speaking through Justice S. Ravindra Bhat, has opined as follows:

*“20. The standard to be considered therefore, is one, where the court would look at the material in a broad manner, and reasonably see whether the accused's guilt may be proved. The judgments of this court have, therefore, emphasized that the satisfaction which courts are expected to record, i.e., that the accused may not be guilty, is only prima facie, based on a reasonable reading, which does not call for meticulous examination of the materials collected during investigation (as held in *Union of India v. Rattan Malik*). Grant of bail on ground of undue delay in trial, cannot be said to be fettered by Section 37 of the Act, given the imperative of Section 436A which is applicable to offences under the NDPS Act too (ref. *Satender Kumar Antil supra*). Having regard to these factors the court is of the opinion that in the facts of this case, the appellant deserves to be enlarged on bail.*

21. Before parting, it would be important to reflect that laws which impose stringent conditions for grant of bail, may be necessary in public interest; yet, if trials are not concluded in time, the injustice wrecked on the individual is immeasurable.

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Jails are overcrowded and their living conditions, more often than not, appalling.” (emphasis added)

9. In view the above, the present petition is allowed. Thus, without commenting upon the merits of the case lest it may prejudice the outcome of the trial, the petitioner-Gurwinder Singh is ordered to be released on regular bail during trial on his furnishing bail bonds/surety bonds to the satisfaction of Illaqa Magistrate/Trial Court.

10. Nothing observed hereinabove shall be construed as expression of opinion of this Court on merits of the case and the trial Court shall proceed without being prejudiced by observations of this Court.

(HARPREET SINGH BRAR)
JUDGE

28.07.2025*Neha*

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