

CRM-M-60854-2024

IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA
AT CHANDIGARH

CRM-M-60854-2024
Reserved on: 07.07.2025
Pronounced on: 22.07.2025

Sahil ...Petitioner

Versus

State of Haryana ...Respondent

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE ANOOP CHITKARA

Present: Mr. Keshav Pratap Singh, Advocate
for the petitioner.

Mr. Harpreet Kaur, AAG, Haryana.

ANOOP CHITKARA, J.

FIR No.	Dated	Police Station	Sections
27	21.01.2024	Sadar Yamuna Nagar, District Yamuna Nagar	22(C) & 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. Per paragraph 18 of the bail petition as well as custody certificate dated 12.05.2025, the accused has the following criminal antecedents:

Sr. No.	FIR No.	Date	Offenses	Police Station
1	35	23.01.2024	22(C) & 29 of NDPS Act	Gandhi Nagar, Yamuna Nagar

3. The facts and allegations are taken from the reply dated 01.03.2025, filed by the State. On 21.01.2024, police officials were on patrolling and they received a secret information that one Deven Kashyap illegally sells the intoxicant pills. The Investigator claims to have complied with all the statutory requirements of the NDPS Act, 1985, and BNSS 2023. Thereafter, the police recovered massive quantity of drugs from house of Deven Kashyap, details of which are mentioned in para 14 of the status report, which reads as follows:-

“THE NAME AND TOTAL WEIGHT OF THE DRUG-

Alprazolam Tablets I.P 0.5 mg, Alpcore-0.5 mg, Batch No-T-12331-A in

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48 boxes, having 10 strips in each box, each strip contain 60 tablets, total 48X600 28800, Tramadol Hydrochloride Tablets USP 100mg, Tramowell - 100 Tablets, Batch No-T231101 in 45 boxes each box contains 50 strips, each strip contains 10 tablets, total 45X500 = 22500, Alprazolam Tablets 1.P 0.5 mg, Rlam 0.5 Tablets, Batch No. 1450923 in 140 boxes each box contains 8 strips, each strip contains 75 tablets, total 140X600 = 84000 Total 135300 tablets i.e. 112800 Alprazolam tablets 22500 Tramadol tablets). ASI Mohan Kumar took out 10 tablets from Alprazolam tablets I.P 0.5 mg., Alpcore-0.5 mg, Batch No. T-12331-A and its weight was 1.04 GM as such weight of 28800 tablets was found 2Kg. 995.2 gram, weight of 10 tablets of Tramadol Hydrochloride Tablets USP 100 mg., Tramowell 100 tablets, Batch No. T231101 was 2.74 gram as such weight of 22500 tablets was 6Kg. 165 gram. weight of 15 tablets of Alprazolam tablets 1.P 0.5 mg. Rlam 0.5 tablets, Batch No. 1450923 was 1.82 Gram thus weight of total 84000 tablets was 10 Kg. 192 Gram. As such weight of total 1,35,300 tablets was 19 Kg. 352 gram.”

4. After the above said recovery, Deven Kashyap named the petitioner as supplier of the contraband.

5. The petitioner's counsel submits that petitioner has been falsely implicated in the present case, no evidence is there against the petitioner except disclosure statement, challan has been filed and he is in custody from last 01 year & 06 months. 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.

6. The State's counsel opposes bail and refers to the para 6 of the status report, which reads as follows:-

“That during course of investigation CDR of Mobile No. 7876999905 (petitioner), Mobile No. 9996991106 (accused Parshant Garg) and 9518420486 of accused Deven Kashyap and Parshant Garg was obtained. As per CDR, the petitioner found in contact with each other. The videography was done at the spot and transferred in pen drive (R-4). Certificate u/s 65-B of Evidence Act was obtained, which is enclosed herewith as Annexure R-5.”

REASONING:

7. During the investigation, the police found call details between petitioner and co-accused Deven Kashyap and based on such details, petitioner was arrested.

8. Analysis of the above would lead to the following outcome.

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The evidence against the petitioner is mentioned in para 13 of the status report, which reads as follows:-

“13. EVIDENCE AGAINST THE PETITIONER:- 19 kg 352 grams narcotic tablets were found from the premises of accused Deven Kashyap in the presence of independent witnesses. These narcotics tablets were purchased by accused Deven Kashyap from the petitioner. Petitioner got recovered cash Rs.4,000/- from his own room. As per CDR, petitioner is found in contact with other co-accused. FSL report and statements of witnesses recorded under section 161 Cr.P.C. are also strong evidences against the petitioner and other co-accused. Bank statement of the petitioner and other co-accused also show transfer of money in the account of each other accused.”

9. Although the recovery is not from the petitioner but there are call details between the petitioner and main accused. Perusal of the petition shows that call details have not been mentioned. Counsel for the petitioner argued that evidence against the petitioner is only in the shape of disclosure statement. This argument is contradicted by the call details and perusal of the bail petition does not mention any explanation about call details. Needless to say that vide Section 37 legislature has shifted burden on the petitioner, which has not been discharged. Thus, the petitioner is not entitled to bail on merits. As per custody certificated dated 12.05.2025, petitioner's custody in this FIR is 01 year, 03 months & 19 days, which comes to around 01 year & 06 months as of date. Given the massive quantity of drug, petitioner is not entitled to bail on custody.

10. The quantity allegedly involved in this case is commercial. 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.

11. Section 37¹ of the NDPS Act mandates under sub-section (1) (b) of section 37 that no person accused of an offense punishable for offenses involving commercial quantity shall be released on bail unless- (i) the Public Prosecutor has been given an opportunity to oppose the application of release, and (ii) where the Public Prosecutor opposes the application, the Court is satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for believing that accused is not guilty of such offense and is not likely to commit any offense while on bail. Thus, the rigors of S. 37 of the NDPS Act apply in the present case, and the burden

¹ **37. Offences to be cognizable and non-bailable.**—(1) Notwithstanding anything contained in the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (2 of 1974),—

(a) every offence punishable under this Act shall be cognizable;

(b) no person accused of an offence punishable for offences under section 19 or section 24 or section 27A and also for offences involving commercial quantity shall be released on bail or on his own bond unless—

(i) the Public Prosecutor has been given an opportunity to oppose the application for such release, and (ii) where the Public Prosecutor opposes the application, the court is satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for believing that he is not guilty of such offence and that he is not likely to commit any offence while on bail.

(2) The limitations on granting of bail specified in clause (b) of sub-section (1) are in addition to the limitations under the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (2 of 1974) or any other law for the time being in force on granting of bail.

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is on the petitioner to satisfy the twin conditions put in place by the Legislature under Section 37 of the NDPS Act. Given the legislative mandate of S. 37 of the NDPS Act, the Court can release a person accused of an offense punishable under the NDPS Act for possessing a commercial quantity of contraband only after recording reasonable satisfaction of its rigors.

12. The State's Counsel argues that a plain reading of Section 37 reveals that the legislature intends to make the law stringent to curb the drug menace. It is further to be noticed that the provisions are couched in negative language, meaning that to grant bail, the Court needs to record a finding that there are reasonable grounds for believing that the petitioner is not guilty of the offense. The burden of proof is also on the petitioner to satisfy the Court about his non-involvement in the case. While interpreting the provisions of Section 37 of the NDPS Act, the Court must be guided by the objective sought to be achieved by putting these stringent conditions.

13. Satisfying the fetters of S. 37 of the NDPS Act is candling the infertile eggs. The stringent conditions of section 37 placed in the statute by the legislature do not create a bar for bail for specified categories, including the commercial quantity; however, it creates hurdles by placing a reverse burden on the accused, and once crossed, the rigors no more exist, and the factors for bail become similar to the bail petitions under general penal statutes like IPC. Thus, both the twin conditions need to be satisfied before a person accused of possessing a commercial quantity of drugs or psychotropic substance is to be released on bail. The first condition is to provide an opportunity to the Public Prosecutor, enabling them to take a stand on the bail application. The second stipulation is that the Court must be satisfied that reasonable grounds exist for believing that the accused is not guilty of such an offense and is not likely to commit any offense while on bail. If either of these conditions is not met, the ban on granting bail operates. The expression "reasonable grounds" means something more than prima facie grounds. It contemplates substantial probable causes for believing the accused is not guilty of the alleged offense. Even on fulfilling one of the conditions, the reasonable grounds for believing that the accused is not guilty of such an offense, the Court still cannot give a finding on the assurance that the accused is not likely to commit any such crime again.

14. The petitioner's arguments did not point toward any material contradictions.

15. The submissions made above and the grounds in the bail petition do not shift the burden the legislature places on the accused under S. 37 of the NDPS Act. The petitioner has not stated anything in the bail petition to discharge the burden put by the stringent conditions placed in the statute by the legislature under section 37 of the NDPS Act. The investigation reveals sufficient prima facie evidence to connect the petitioner with the crime; thus, the petitioner fails to make out a case for bail. Any detailed discussions about the evidence may prejudice the case of the petitioner, the State, or the other accused.

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16. In *Union of India (NCB) v. Khalil Uddin*, decided on 21 Oct 2022, 2022 SCC OnLine SC 2109, Hon'ble Supreme Court holds,

[4]. According to the prosecution, contraband material weighing about 13 kgs. of morphine was found in a motor vehicle which was driven by co-accused named Md. Jakir Hussain. During the course of investigation, it was found that the motor vehicle was recorded in the name of Md. Nizam Uddin who had executed a sale letter and handed over the custody of the vehicle to accused Md. Abdul Hai and that accused Md. Jakir Hussain was the driver employed by accused Md. Abdul Hai and that contraband material in question was to be handed over to accused-Khalil Uddin, an owner of a tea shop.

[5]. The High Court by its order which is presently under challenge, directed release of both the accused as stated above on bail after they had undergone custody to the tune of about a year. Questioning grant of relief to said accused, the instant appeals have been preferred.

[7]. What emerges from the record is that large quantity of contraband weighing about 13 kgs of morphine was found in a car which was driven by Md. Jakir Hussain. Whether the role played by said Md. Jakir Hussain could get connected with both the accused is a question.

[8]. The answer to said question could be the statement recorded of Md. Nizam Uddin. The statement of Md. Jakir Hussain recorded under Section 67 of the Act has also named his owner accused Abdul Hai. We are conscious of the fact that the validity and scope of such statements under Section 67 has been pronounced upon by this Court in *Tofan Singh v. State of Tamil Nadu*. In *State by (NCB) Bengaluru v. Pallulabid Ahmad Arimutta*, the rigour of law lay down by this Court in *Tofan Singh* was held to be applicable even at the stage of grant of bail.

[9]. However, going by the circumstances on record, at this stage, on the strength of the statement of Md. Nizam Uddin, though allegedly retracted later, the matter stands on a different footing. In our considered view, in the face of the mandate of Section 37 of the Act, the High Court could not and ought not to have released the accused on bail. We, therefore, allow these appeals, set aside the view taken by the High Court and direct that both the appellants be taken in custody forthwith.

[10]. We have been given to understand that the charge-sheet has been filed. In the circumstances, we direct the Trial Court to take up the matter and conclude the proceedings as early as possible and preferably within six months from the receipt of this order.

17. In *Narayan Takri v. State of Odisha*, decided on 10 Sep 2024, SLP (Crl.) 8198-2024, Hon'ble Supreme Court holds,

The petitioners are in custody since 28th May, 2022 for alleged commission of alleged offence under Section 20(b)(ii)(c) of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985. As per the FIR allegation, 125.3 kg. of "Ganja" was recovered from the petitioners.

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[3]. It is not in dispute that the trial has commenced and that three prosecution witnesses have been examined till date.

[4]. Learned counsel for the petitioners submits that the third prosecution witness was examined as far back as on 28th January, 2024 and since then, no other prosecution witness has been examined. There is, however, no such averment in the petition.

[5]. Learned counsel appearing for the respondent submits that every endeavor shall be made on behalf of the prosecution to have all the witnesses examined by the end of this year.

[6]. The trial court is encouraged to expedite the trial and give its decision as early as possible, in accordance with law.

[7]. We, however, do not see any reason to interfere the impugned judgment and order at this stage; however, it is clarified that in the event the trial is not completed by the end of this year, the petitioners shall be at liberty to renew their prayer for bail before the trial court.

18. A perusal of the bail petition and the documents attached prima facie points towards the petitioner's involvement and does not make out a case for bail. The impact of crime, coupled with criminal history, would also not justify bail. Any further discussions will likely prejudice the petitioner; this court refrains from doing so.

19. The petitioner's custody of around 01 year & 06 months cannot be termed prolonged, given the minimum sentence prescribed for the offense.

20. Regarding the delay in the trial, if the trial does not conclude within two years of the petitioner's custody, and the delay is not attributable to the petitioner, the petitioner may apply for bail before the trial Court. The Court shall not be influenced by the dismissal of bail on merits or by the criminal history and shall decide it on changed circumstances and the prolonged trial.

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

22. Petition dismissed. All pending applications, if any, stand disposed of.

(ANOOP CHITKARA)
JUDGE

22.07.2025
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Whether speaking/reasoned: Yes
Whether reportable: No.