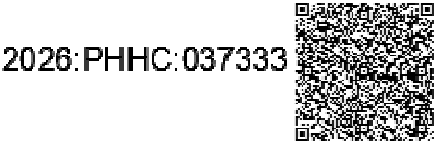


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105
IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA AT CHANDIGARH

CRM-M-8593-2024

Neeraj Kumar
.....Petitioner
Versus
State of Haryana and another
...Respondents

Date of decision: March 11, 2026
Date of Uploading: March 11, 2026

CORAM: HON’BLE MR. JUSTICE SUMEET GOEL

Present:- Mr. Vivek Goyal, Advocate for the petitioner.

Ms. Mahima Yashpal Singla, Senior DAG Haryana.

SUMEET GOEL, J. (ORAL)

Present petition has been filed under Section 439 of the Cr. P.C. ,
1973 seeking grant of regular bail to the petitioner, in case bearing FIR No.717
dated 14.11.2023, registered for the offences punishable under Sections 34,
406, 420 of the IPC, 1860 (Section 409 of IPC added later on), at Police
Stasion Gharaunda, District Karnal.

2. The gravamen of the allegations against the petitioner is that
Inspector, Food and Supply Department, Gharaunda, alleged that M/s Rohit
Trading Company had entered into an agreement with the Food and Supply
Department for the milling of government paddy during the Kharif season of
2022. During the said season, a total quantity of 69,743.250 quintals of paddy

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was allotted to the said rice miller for milling, out of which 46,727.977 quintals of rice was required to be delivered to the Food Corporation of India. However, up to 30.09.2023, the rice miller had delivered only 36,088.201 quintals of rice and the remaining quantity of 10,639.776 quintals of rice was not supplied. During the course of a physical inspection of the rice mill premises, the stock of paddy as well as rice was found to be nil. In this manner, the rice miller allegedly caused a loss of ₹4,16,94,241/- to the government exchequer.

During investigation, Neeraj Rana (*petitioner herein*) of M/s Rohit Trading Company was arrested on 17.11.2023, and pursuant to his disclosure statement, he got recovered 39.60 quintals of rice along with bardana (gunny bags).

3. Learned counsel for the petitioner has argued that the petitioner was arrested on 17.11.2023, and thereafter, he was granted concession of interim regular bail by this Court, on 28.02.2024 and the said order is enuring till date. Learned counsel has submitted that the petitioner has been falsely implicated into the FIR in question. Learned counsel has further argued that genesis of the FIR is a civil dispute pertaining to supply of Custom Milled Rice (CMR). Learned counsel has submitted that the petitioner has already invoked arbitration clause and sought for arbitration, but the complainant has not responded thereto. Learned counsel has further submitted that upon culmination of investigation, challan already stands presented and the trial emanating from the FIR is magisterial one. Learned counsel has further argued that the petitioner has already suffered incarceration for more than 03 months and is not involved in any other case. Thus, regular bail is prayed for.

4. Learned State counsel has opposed the present petition by arguing that the allegations raised are serious in nature and thus, the petitioner does not

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deserve the concession of the regular bail. Learned State counsel seeks to place on record custody certificate dated 09.03.2026, in the Court today, which is taken on record.

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

Before delving into the matter further, it would be germane to refer herein the case law governing the issue in hand:

5.1 Gudikanti Narasimhulu and others vs. Public Prosecutor,

High Court of Andhra Pradesh AIR 1978 SUPREME COURT

429, relevant whereof reads as under:

“10. The significance and sweep of Article 21 make the deprivation of liberty a matter of grave concern and permissible only when the law authorising it is reasonable, even-handed and geared to the goals of community good and State necessity spelt out in Article 19. Indeed, the considerations I have set out as criteria are germane to the constitutional proposition I have deduced. Reasonableness postulates intelligent care and predicates that deprivation of freedom- by refusal of bail is not for punitive purpose but for the bi-focal interests of justice-to the individual involved and society affected.

11. We must weigh the contrary factors to answer the test of reasonableness, subject to the need for securing the presence, of the bail applicant. It makes sense to assume that a man on bail has a better chance to prepare or present his case than one remanded in custody. And if public justice is to be promoted, mechanical detention should be close to ours, the function of bail is limited, 'community roots' of the, applicant are stressed and, after the Vera Foundation's Manhattan Bail Project, monetary suretyship is losing ground. The considerable public expense in keeping in custody where no danger of disappearance or disturbance can arise, is not a negligible consideration. Equally important is the deplorable condition, verging on, the inhuman, of our sub-jails, that the unrewarding cruelty and expensive custody of avoidable incarceration makes refusal of bail unreasonable and a Policy favouring release justly sensible.

12. A few other weighty factors deserve reference. All deprivation of liberty is validated by social defence and individual correction along an anti-criminal direction. Public justice is central to the whole scheme of bail law. Fleeing justice must be forbidden but punitive harshness should be minimised. Restorative devices to redeem the man, even, through community service, meditative drill, study classes or other resources should be innovated, and playing foul with public peace by tampering with evidence, intimidating witnesses or committing offence while on judicially

sanctioned 'free enterprise,' should be provided against. No seeker of justice shall play confidence tricks on the court or community. Thus, conditions may be hung around bail orders, not to cripple but to protect. Such is the holistic jurisdiction and humanistic orientation invoked by the judicial discretion correlated to the values of our constitution."

5.2. Further, the Hon'ble Supreme Court in a judgment titled as **Gurcharan Singh vs. State (UT of Delhi) 1978 (1) SCC 118**, has held as under:

*"Where the granting of bail lies within the discretion of the **court**, the granting or denial is regulated, to a large extent, by the facts and circumstances of each particular case. Since the object of the detention or imprisonment of the accused is to secure his appearance and submission to the jurisdiction and the judgment of the **court**, the primary inquiry is whether a recognizance or bond would effect that end."*

5.3 Furthermore, the Hon'ble Supreme Court in a judgment titled as **Sanjay Chandra vs. CBI (2012) 1 SCC 40**, has held as under:

"21. In bail applications, generally, it has been laid down from the earliest times that the object of bail is to secure the appearance of the accused person at his trial by reasonable amount of bail. The object of bail is neither punitive nor preventative. Deprivation of liberty must be considered a punishment, unless it can be required to ensure that an accused person will stand his trial when called upon. The courts owe more than verbal respect to the principle that punishment begins after conviction, and that every man is deemed to be innocent until duly tried and duly found guilty."

22. From the earliest times, it was appreciated that detention in custody pending completion of trial could be a cause of great hardship. From time to time, necessity demands that some unconvicted persons should be held in custody pending trial to secure their attendance at the trial but in such cases, "necessity" is the operative test. In this country, it would be quite contrary to the concept of personal liberty enshrined in the Constitution that any person should be punished in respect of any matter, upon which, he has not been convicted or that in any circumstances, he should be deprived of his liberty upon only the belief that he will tamper with the witnesses if left at liberty, save in the most extraordinary circumstances."

6. The petitioner was arrested on 17.11.2023 and thereafter, was granted interim regular bail by this Court, vide order dated 28.02.2024. The said order is enuring till date. It is not in dispute before this Court that the petitioner has not misused the said concession. Upon culmination of investigation, challan stands presented on 03.01.2024 and charges have been

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framed on 10.04.2025. Out of total 07 cited prosecution witnesses, none has been examined till date. It is, thus, indubitable that conclusion of the trial will take long. It is also not in dispute that the trial emanating from the FIR in question is magisterial in nature. The rival contention raised at Bar give rise to debatable issues, which shall essentially 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 been brought forward to indicate the likelihood of the petitioner absconding from the process of justice or interfering with the prosecution evidence.

6.1. As per custody certificate dated 09.03.2026 filed by learned State counsel, the petitioner has already suffered incarceration for a period of 03 months and 12 days & is not shown to be involved in any other FIR(s).

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, if not required in any other case, on his furnishing bail/surety bonds to the satisfaction of the Ld. concerned CJM/Duty Magistrate. However, in addition to conditions that may be imposed by the concerned CJM/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

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shall not change his cell-phone number without prior permission of the trial Court/Illaqa Magistrate.
(vii) The petitioner shall not in any manner try to delay the trial.

8. In case of breach of any of the aforesaid conditions and those which may be imposed by concerned CJM/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

March 11, 2026
mahavir

Whether speaking/reasoned: Yes/No

Whether reportable: Yes/No