



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

CRM-M-11019-2026

Date of decision: 24.03.2026

MANUS DUTTA ALIAS LAVI

....Petitioner

Versus

STATE OF PUNJAB

....Respondent

CORAM:- HON'BLE MS. JUSTICE RUPINDERJIT CHAHAL

Present:- Mr. S.K. Choudhary, Advocate for the petitioner.

Mr. Amritpal Singh Gill, DAG Punjab.

.....

RUPINDERJIT CHAHAL, J. (ORAL)

1. Prayer in the instant petition filed under Section 483 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 is for grant of regular bail to the petitioner in case FIR No.225 dated 23.12.2025, registered under Sections 21(b), 29, 61, 85 of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985, at Police Station Division No.2 Pathankot, District Pathankot.

2. Brief facts of the present case, as per the prosecution, are that on 23.12.2025 HC Gurpreet Singh, along with his fellow police officials was on a patrolling duty and on the basis of suspicion apprehended one Sahil @ Bhatti, who was found in conscious possession of 05 grams 77 mg of *Heroin*. Initially the FIR in question was registered against the said co-accused Sahil @ Bhatti.

3. Learned counsel for the petitioner contends that the petitioner has been falsely implicated in the present case and he has no concern with the said offence. He argued that the petitioner was neither present at the

spot nor was named in the FIR. It has also been contended that the present



petitioner was nominated as an accused on the basis of disclosure statement made by co-accused Sahil. Apart from the disclosure statement, there is no other evidence to connect the petitioner with the offence in question and it is a trite law that disclosure statement of co-accused during his custodial interrogation is not admissible. No recovery is to be effected from him. The petitioner is in custody since 22.01.2026. The investigation in this case is complete, however, challan is yet to be presented. He further submits that trial will take a long time to conclude and no useful purpose would be served by keeping him behind bars. Therefore, it is urged that the petition deserves to be allowed.

4. On the other hand, learned State counsel has filed the custody certificate and status report in the matter, which are taken on record and while referring to the same, learned State counsel has vehemently opposed the prayer for grant of bail by submitting that the offence committed by the petitioner is serious in nature. He has further submitted that the petitioner is also involved in multiple other cases meaning thereby he is a habitual offender.

5. A specific query was raised by this Court to learned State counsel as to whether apart from the disclosure statement, any material has been found during investigation to connect the petitioner with the recovered contraband, to which he answered that there is nothing else to connect the petitioner with the recovered contraband.

6. As far as the argument of learned counsel for the petitioner regarding nomination of accused on the basis of disclosure statement is



Hon'ble Supreme Court titled as '***Tofan Singh vs. State of Tamil Nadu, AIR 2020 Supreme Court 5592***', relevant whereof reads as under:

"155. We answer the reference by stating: (i) That the officers who are invested with powers under section 53 of the NDPS Act are "police officers within the meaning of section 25 of the Evidence Act, as a result of which any confessional statement made to them would be barred under the provisions of section 25 of the Evidence Act, and cannot be taken into account in order to convict an accused under the NDPS Act (ii) That a statement recorded under section 67 of the NDPS Act cannot be used as a confessional statement in the trial of an offence under the NDPS ACT".

7. More recently, the Hon'ble Supreme Court in a judgment titled as '***Smt. Najmunisha, Abdul Hamid Chandmiya @ Ladoo Bapu Vs. State of Gujrat, Narcotics Control Bureau' 2024 INSC 290***', has reiterated the ratio decidendi of the judgment of Hon'ble Supreme Court in the case of Tofan Singh (supra).

8. The Hon'ble Supreme Court while dealing with a plea for grant of anticipatory bail in a case under NDPS Act, 1985; in a judgment titled as '***Vijay Singh vs. The State of Haryana, bearing Special Leave to Appeal (Crl.) No.(s)1266/2023 decided on 17.05.2023***' has held as under:

"The petitioner is alleged to have committed offences under Sections 15 and 29 of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985 (hereinafter called the NDPS Act". His application for anticipatory bail was rejected by the High Court. The allegations in the FIR are that 1.7 Kg of Poppy Straw (Doda Post) was recovered from the co-accused. The petitioner concededly was not present at the spot but was named by the co-



accused. That apart there is no other material to implicate the petitioner. The prosecution urges that another case with allegations of commission of offence under the NDPS Act are pending against the petitioner. It is not denied that in those proceedings he was granted bail. Having regard to these circumstances, the petitioner is directed to the enlarged on anticipatory bail, subject to such terms and conditions as the trial Court may impose. The petition is allowed. All pending applications are disposed of."

9. The petitioner is sought to be arrayed solely on the basis of disclosure statement of the co-accused. Suffice to say there is no other material available to connect the petitioner with the recovered contraband. The veracity of the disclosure statement made by the co-accused will be subject to comprehensive scrutiny during the course of the trial and same cannot be a ground to decline the concession of regular bail to the petitioner.

10. Having heard learned counsel for the parties at length and after perusing the record of the case, it is evident that the petitioner is in custody for the last more than 02 months; investigation is complete; however, challan is yet to be presented and the fact that trial may take a long time to conclude, no useful purpose would be served by detaining him in further custody. His continued detention without the prospect of the trial being concluded in the near future would be violative of her rights under Article 21 of the Constitution of India.

11. Reliance is placed upon a judgment in the case of ***Dataram Singh vs. State of Uttar Pradesh & Anr. 2018(2) R.C.R. (Criminal) 131***, wherein Hon'ble Apex Court has held that keeping somebody behind the



bars, till his guilt is proved, for an indefinite period amounts to infringement of her right to life and liberty, as enshrined under Article 21 of Constitution of India and is against the principle “*bail is a rule*” and “*jail is an exception*”.

12. As regards the submission of learned State counsel that petitioner is involved in other/one more criminal case(s), reference is placed upon the judgment of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in ***Maulana Mohd. Amir Rashadi Vs. State of U.P. and another, 2012 (2) SCC 382*** in which, it is held that the facts and circumstances of the present case are to be seen while deciding a bail application and the bail application of the petitioner cannot be rejected solely on the ground that the petitioner is involved in other/another case(s). The relevant portion of the said judgment is reproduced herein-below:-

"As observed by the High Court, merely on the basis of criminal antecedents, the claim of the second respondent cannot be rejected. In other words, it is the duty of the Court to find out the role of the accused in the case in which he has been charged and other circumstances such as possibility of fleeing away from the jurisdiction of the Court etc."

13. In view of the above, the present petition is allowed and the petitioner is ordered to be released on bail on his furnishing bail bonds/surety bonds to the satisfaction of the learned trial Court/Duty Magistrate/CJM concerned. It is clarified that nothing stated herein shall be construed as an expression of opinion on the merits of the case.

(RUPINDERJIT CHAHAL)
JUDGE

24.03.2026
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PUNEET SHARMA
2026.03.26 11.22
I attest to the accuracy and
authenticity of this order/judgment

i) Whether speaking/reasoned?
ii) Whether reportable?

Yes/No
Yes/No