

2026:PHHC:005004



IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB & HARYANA AT
CHANDIGARH

CRM-M No.12670 of 2025
Date of decision: 15.01.2026

Lovepreet Singh alias Sonu ... Petitioner

Vs.

State of Punjab ... Respondent

CORAM: HON'BLE MRS. JUSTICE MANISHA BATRA

Present:- Mr. Ruhani Chadha, Advocate,
for the petitioner.

Ms. Sakshi Bakshi, AAG, Punjab,
for the respondent-State.

MANISHA BATRA, J. (Oral)

1. The present petition has been filed by the petitioner under Section 483 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 (For short “BNSS”) seeking regular bail in the FIR mentioned below:-

FIR No.	Dated	Police Station	Sections
67	19.08.2023	Sarai Amant Khan, District Tarn Taran	21 of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985 (for short ‘NDPS Act’) and 25 of Arms Act, 1959 (21 (c) and 29 of NDPS Act added later on)

2026:PHHC:005004



2. As per the allegations, on 19.08.2023, the petitioner along with the co-accused was apprehended on the basis of a secret information and recovery of 1 kg 290 grams of heroin was effected from them which was taken into custody. The petitioner and co-accused were formally arrested. The investigation now stands completed.

3. It is argued by learned counsel for the petitioner that he has been falsely implicated in this case. A false recovery has been planted upon him. He is in custody for a period of more than 02 years and 04 months. His medical condition is not good. The trial will take considerable time to conclude since no prosecution witness has been examined so far. His involvement in other cases cannot be considered to be a reason for denying benefit of bail to him. No useful purpose would be served by keeping him in custody any more. As such, it is argued that the petition deserves to be allowed.

4. Status report and custody certificate have been filed. Learned Assistant Advocate General, Punjab has argued that as per the opinion of medical officer of the concerned jail, the condition of petitioner is stable. He is provided proper treatment. He is a habitual offender. There are chances of his committing similar offences, if extended benefit of bail. The rigors of Section 37 of NDPS Act are attracted in this case. It is, thus stressed that he does not deserve to be extended benefit of bail.

5. This Court has considered the rival submissions.

2026:PHHC:005004



6. The petitioner along with the co-accused is alleged to have been found in conscious possession of commercial quantity of contraband. Though the allegations levelled against him make out a prima facie case for commission of the aforementioned offences, however, he is in custody since 19.08.2023. However, it is apparent from the record that there are no chances of conclusion of the trial in near future and it will take considerable time. It is well settled proposition of law that grant of bail on account of delay in trial and long period of incarceration is to be considered in the light of Section 37 of the NDPS Act. Reliance in this regard can be placed upon the observations made by Hon'ble Apex Court in ***Mohd. Muslim @ Hussain v. State (NCT of Delhi), 2023 SCC OnLine SC 352***, wherein it was held that grant of bail on account of undue delay in trial cannot be said to be fettered under Section 37 of the NDPS Act, given the imperative of Section 436-A of Cr.P.C. which is applicable to offence under the Act. It was also observed that jails are overcrowded and their living conditions are, more often than not, appalling. The danger of unjustified imprisonment is that inmates are more likely to be hardened rather than reformed. Reliance can also be placed upon ***Manmandal and Another v. State of West Bengal, Special Leave Petition (Criminal) No.8656 of 2023 decided on 14.09.2023 and Rabi Prakash v. State of Odisha, 2023 SCC Online SC 110***, wherein the Hon'ble Supreme Court had extended benefit of bail to the accused who

2026:PHHC:005004



had been incarcerated for a long period by observing that prolonged incarceration militated against the most precious fundamental right guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution and in such a situation, the constitutional principles must override the statutory embargo contained under Section 37 of the NDPS Act.

7. Reliance can also be placed upon ***Santosh Pawar Vs. State of Chhattishgarh & Anr., Criminal Appeal No.4883/2025***, which is a recently pronounced verdict of Hon'ble Supreme Court observing that rigours of Section 37 of NDPS Act will not be a bar for considering the case of an accused for bail as it comes with a condition that the prosecution would press for an early completion of trial. In the above-mentioned case the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India held that appellant who was being prosecuted for being in possession of commercial quantity of narcotic substance, was entitled for bail in view of her incarceration for a period of 19 months.

8. Similarly in another case i.e. in the case of ***Satender Kumar Antil v. Central Bureau of Investigation, (2022) 10 SCC 51*** prolonged incarceration and inordinate delay engaged the attention of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India, which considered the correct approach towards bail, with respect to several enactments, including Section 37 NDPS Act. The court expressed the opinion that Section 436A (which requires inter alia the accused to be enlarged on bail if the trial is not concluded within

2026:PHHC:005004



specified periods) of the Criminal Procedure Code, 1973 would apply.

9. In the case of ***Ismail Khan @ Pathan vs. State of Rajasthan Criminal Appeal No.4911 of 2025*** with regard to recovery of commercial quantity of narcotic substance, the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India accorded the benefit of bail to the accused in view of prolonged incarceration for a period of 02 years and 08 months of the accused.

10. The similar benefit has been extended in another appeal i.e. ***SLP No.15699-2025 titled as Ebrahim @ Ibrahim SK vs. The State of West Bengal*** and in the case of ***Pamesh Arora vs. UT Chandigarh Criminal Appeal No.4872 of 2025***.

11. On analyzing the peculiar facts and circumstances of the present case in the light of the aforementioned principles of law, it transpires that the petitioner has suffered prolonged incarceration for a period of more than 02 years and 04 months, the trial is not likely to be concluded in near future since none out of 20 prosecution witnesses has been examined so far; the continued detention of the petitioner is not likely to serve any fruitful purpose; there is nothing on record to show that if released on bail, the petitioner will not participate in the trial or will abscond.

12. In view of the above discussion, this Court is of the opinion that a case is made out for grant of bail to the petitioner at this stage.

Accordingly, the petition is allowed and the petitioner is ordered to be

2026:PHHC:005004



released on bail on his furnishing personal as well as surety bonds to the satisfaction of the learned trial Court/CJM/Duty Magistrate concerned, and subject to the condition that he shall not directly or indirectly make any inducement, threat or promise to any person acquainted with the facts of the case. He shall appear before the learned trial Court on each and every date of hearing except when his presence has been exempted by the trial Court. He shall surrender his passport, if any, furnish details of his cell phone and Aadhaar card, and shall not change his mobile number(s) during the pendency of the trial.

13. It is clarified that the observations made above shall not be construed as an expression of opinion of this Court on the merits of the case and shall not influence the outcome of the trial in any manner.

15.01.2026
manju

(MANISHA BATRA)
JUDGE

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