



IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA
AT CHANDIGARH

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CRM-M No.13888 of 2026 (O&M)

Date of Decision: 09.04.2026

Gurjeet Singh

.....Petitioner

Versus

State of Punjab

..... Respondent

CORAM: HON'BLE MR.JUSTICE SURYA PARTAP SINGH

Present: Mr. Abhaysher Singh, Advocate for the petitioner.

Mr. I.P.S. Sabharwal, DAG, Punjab.

SURYA PARTAP SINGH, J. (Oral):

This is the first petition for bail, filed by the petitioner under Section 483 of the 'Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita 2023'. This petition pertains to a case arising out of FIR No.7 dated 12.02.2025, for the commission of offence punishable under Sections 15-C and 29 of Narcotic Drugs & Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985, Police Station Sadar Malout, District Shri Muktsar Sahib.

2. Briefly stating the facts emerging from record are that the FIR of this case came into being at the instance of 'Inspector Gurwinder Singh', who stated that he had received a secret information that in a tanker bearing registration No.PB-03BA-6751, whereupon words "On Army Duty" were written, with paint, large quantity of poppy husk was being transported. According to above named police officer in view of above mentioned information the abovesaid vehicle was intercepted and when the goods, being



transported in the abovementioned vehicle were checked, 90 bags of 30 Kg. Each, containing poppy husk, were recovered. As per report submitted by the above named police officer when the above mentioned vehicle was intercepted 'Maninder Singh' was driving the same and 'Akashdeep Singh' was on the navigator's seat.

3. It is the case of the prosecution that on recovery of above mentioned contraband requisite formalities with regard to seizure and sealing of contraband, slapping of FIR and formal arrest of petitioner were completed and further investigation taken up. As per prosecution during the course of investigation the accused 'Maninder Singh' suffered a disclosure statement wherein he nominated the present petitioner, and one more person, namely 'Janakraj', as supplier of the above mentioned contraband.

4. The learned State counsel has filed custody certificate of the petitioner and reply in the form of affidavit duly sworn by the Deputy Superintendent of Police, PBI, H & F, Sri Muktsar Sahib (Additional Charge, Sub-Division Malout, Sri Muktsar Sahib). The same be taken on record.

5. Heard.

6. With regard to facts of the instant case the observation in the case of 'Surender Kumar Khanna Vs. Intelligence Officer Directorate of Revenue Intelligence' 2018(3) SCC Online SC 757, are relevant, wherein it has been held by the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India that the disclosure statement of co-accused is inadmissible against another accused, as the disclosure statement is not a substantive piece of evidence against other accused.

7. Similar principle has been laid down by the Hon'ble Supreme



Court of India in the case of ‘Preet Kamal Vs. State of Punjab’, 2018(4) RCR (Criminal) 938, wherein it has been held that the disclosure statement of an accused can be used only against the person making the same, and not against the co-accused.

8. In ‘Tofan Singh Vs. State of Tamil Nadu’, 2021(4) SCC 1 also, it has been observed by the Hon’ble Supreme Court of India that confessional statement of accused recorded under Section 67 of NDPS Act cannot be admitted in evidence, as a confession.

9. The record has been perused carefully.

10. If the facts and circumstances of the present case are analyzed in the light of above-mentioned principles of law, it transpires that:-

- i) that the petitioner is already in custody for a period of more than seven months and twenty days;
- ii) that as per the story set-out by the prosecution nothing has been recovered from the possession of petitioner, thus, the rigors of Section-37 of NDPS Act are not attracted in the present case;
- iii) that the investigation in this case is already complete, and final report under Section 193 of BNSS has already been filed in the Court;
- iv) that that the only evidence collected by the Investigating Agency qua the petitioner is the disclosure statement of his co-accused, which was recorded when the co-accused of the petitioner was already in police custody. Thus, there is a



question mark with regard to admissibility of above mentioned disclosure statement in evidence;

- v) that nothing has been left to be recovered from the possession of petitioner;
- vi) that the trial of this case is not likely to be concluded in near future as out of thirteen prosecution witnesses not even a single witness has been examined, so far;
- vii) that the detention of petitioner in judicial lock-up is not likely to serve any purpose;
- viii) that there is nothing on record to show that if released on bail, the petitioner may tamper with the evidence or influence the witnesses;
- ix) that there is nothing on record to show that if released on bail, the petitioner will not co-operate/participate in the trial.

11. In the present case, the principles of law laid down by the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in the case of 'Dataram versus State of Uttar Pradesh and another', (2018) 3 SCC 22, are relevant, wherein it has been observed that "a fundamental postulate of criminal jurisprudence is the presumption of innocence, meaning thereby that a person is believed to be innocent until found guilty. However, there are instances in our criminal law where a reverse onus has been placed on an accused with regard to some specific offences but that is another matter and does not detract from the fundamental postulate in respect of other offences. Yet another important



facet of our criminal jurisprudence is that the grant of bail is the general rule and putting a person in jail or in a prison or in a correction home (whichever expression one may wish to use) is an exception. Unfortunately, some of these basic principles appear to have been lost sight of with the result that more and more persons are being incarcerated and for longer periods. This does not do any good to our criminal jurisprudence or to our society. There is no doubt that the grant or denial of bail is entirely the discretion of the judge considering a case but even so, the exercise of judicial discretion has been circumscribed by a large number of decisions rendered by this Court and by every High Court in the country. Yet, occasionally there is a necessity to introspect whether denying bail to an accused person is the right thing to do on the facts and in the circumstances of a case”.

12. The principles laid down by the Hon’ble the Supreme Court of India in the case of ‘Satender Kumar Antil v. Central Bureau of Investigation’ (2022) 10 SCC 51 are also relevant in this case. In the abovementioned case, it has been observed that “the rate of conviction in criminal cases in India is abysmally low. It appears to us that this factor weighs on the mind of the Court while deciding the bail applications in a negative sense. Courts tend to think that the possibility of a conviction being nearer to rarity, bail applications will have to be decided strictly, contrary to legal principles. We cannot mix up consideration of a bail application, which is not punitive in nature with that of a possible adjudication by way of trial. On the contrary, an ultimate acquittal with continued custody would be a



case of grave injustice”.

13. Recently, in the case of ‘Tapas Kumar Palit Vs. State of Chhattisgarh’, 2025 SCC Online SC 322, the Hon’ble Supreme Court of India has observed that “if an accused is to get a final verdict after incarceration of six to seven years in jail as an undertrial prisoner, then, definitely, it could be said that his right to have a speedy trial under Article 21 of the Constitution has been infringed”. It has also been observed by the Hon’ble Supreme Court of India in the abovementioned case that “delays are bad for the accused and extremely bad for the victims, for Indian society and for the credibility of our justice system, which is valued. Judges are the masters of their Courtrooms and the Criminal Procedure Code provides many tools for the Judges to use in order to ensure that cases proceed efficiently”.

14. To elucidate further, this Court is conscious of the basic and fundamental principle of law that right to speedy trial is a part of reasonable, fair and just procedure enshrined under Article 21 of the Constitution of India. This constitutional right cannot be denied to an undertrial prisoner, as mandated by Hon’ble Apex court in ‘Balwinder Singh versus State of Punjab and another’ 2024 SCC Online SC 4354.

15. Taking into consideration the cumulative effect of all the aforesaid factors, it is hereby held that the petitioner is entitled for the concession of bail, and that the present petition deserves to be allowed.

16. Accordingly, without commenting anything on the merits of the



case, the present petition is hereby **allowed**. The petitioner is hereby ordered to be released on bail on furnishing personal bond and surety bond(s) to the satisfaction of learned trial Court. However, the abovesaid benefit shall be subject to following conditions:-

- i) that the petitioner shall not directly or indirectly make any inducement, threat or promise to any person acquainted with the facts of the case, so as to dissuade him from disclosing such facts to the Court or to any other authority;
- ii) that the petitioner shall at the time of execution of bond, furnish the address to the Court concerned and shall notify the change in address to the trial Court, till the final decision of the trial; and
- iii) that the petitioner shall not leave India without prior permission of trial Court.

17. It is, however, made clear that any observation made hereinabove is only for the purpose of deciding the present petition and the same shall have no bearing on the merits of the case.

(SURYA PARTAP SINGH)
JUDGE

09.04.2026

Manoj Bhutani

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