



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

CRM-M-57946-2024 (O&M)
Date of decision: 11.03.2026
Date of uploading: 11.03.2026

Raju @ Chhinder SinghPetitioner
Versus
State of PunjabRespondent

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE SUMEET GOEL

Present:- Mr. N.S. Sodhi, Advocate for the petitioner.

Mr. Adhiraj Singh, AAG, Punjab.

SUMEET GOEL, J. (ORAL)

1. Present petition has been filed under Section 483 of BNSS for grant of regular bail to the petitioner in FIR No.59 dated 07.08.2024 registered for the offences punishable under Section 21/29 of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985 (for short 'NDPS Act'), at Police Station Ghall Khurd, District Ferozepur.

2. On 27.03.2025, the following order was passed:

“Contends, inter alia, that on the date of alleged occurrence, petitioner was undergoing sentence in FIR No.267 dated 26.11.2019, under Sections 21 and 29 of Narcotic Drugs and Pyshotropic Substances Act, 1985 and Section 25 of Arms Act, 1959, registered at Police Station City, District Moga; thus, he has been falsely implicated in the present case.

Learned State counsel is not able to dispute that petitioner was in custody on the date of alleged occurrence.

Custody Certificate dated 26.03.2025 of the petitioner has been produced. The same is taken on record. Copy thereof supplied to the opposite side. Registry to do the needful.

In view of above, let this matter be brought to notice of Additional Director General of Police (Prisons), Punjab, and thereafter, an affidavit be filed regarding alleged implication of petitioner.

Posted for 30.04.2025.

In the meanwhile, petitioner be released on interim bail in the present case till the next date of hearing on furnishing adequate bail and surety bonds subject to the satisfaction of learned Special Court/CJM/Duty Magistrate concerned.”

3. The gravamen of the FIR in question is that the petitioner is an accused of being involved in FIR pertaining to NDPS Act involving 6.655 kg of heroin, which was allegedly recovered from the co-accused of the petitioner namely Gurjot Singh @ Jot and Simran Kaur @ Indu and the petitioner has been nominated in the present case on the basis of disclosure statement of the co-accused.

4. Learned counsel for the petitioner has iterated that the petitioner was arrested on 13.08.2024 and thereafter has been released on interim regular bail vide order dated 27.03.2025. Learned counsel for the petitioner has further submitted that the mandatory provisions of the NDPS Act have not been complied with, and thus, the prosecution case suffers from inherent defects. Learned counsel has further iterated that sole basis to array the petitioner as an accused is the disclosure statement of co-accused. Learned counsel appearing for the petitioner has further contended that the petitioner has not misused the concession of interim regular bail earlier afforded to him. Learned counsel for the petitioner has iterated that the trial is delayed and the liability thereof cannot be fastened upon the petitioner. Thus, regular bail is prayed for.

5. Learned State counsel has opposed the present petition by arguing that the allegations raised against the petitioner are serious in nature and, thus, he does not deserve the concession of the regular bail. Learned State counsel

has further submitted that the instant bail plea is barred by the rigors of Section 37 of the NDPS Act, and thus, the same ought to be dismissed. Learned State counsel seeks to place on record custody certificate dated 10.03.2026 in Court, which is taken on record.

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

7. The petitioner was arrested on 13.08.2024 whereinafter investigation was carried out and challan was presented on 24.01.2025. Total 23 prosecution witnesses have been cited and out of which only 2 have been examined partly till date. It is not in dispute that the petitioner has not misused the concession of interim regular bail earlier afforded to him vide order dated 27.03.2025. The rival contentions raised at Bar give rise to debatable issues that shall 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.

7.1. The trial is indeed procrastinating and folly thereof cannot be saddled upon the petitioner. In this view of the matter, the rigor imposed under Section 37 of the NDPS Act stands diluted in light of the Article 21 of the Constitution of India.

7.2. This Court in a judgment titled as ***Kulwinder versus State of Punjab*** passed in ***CRM-M-64074-2024*** (2025:PHHC:002695); after relying upon the *ratio decidendi* of the judgments of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in Hussainara Khatoon vs. Home Secy., State of Bihar (1980) 1 SCC 81; Abdul Rehman Antulay vs R.S. Nayak (1992) 1 SCC 225; Javed Gulam Nabi Shaikh

vs. State of Maharashtra and another, 2024(3) RCR (Criminal) 494; Mohd Muslim @ Hussain vs. State (NCT of Delhi) reported as 2023 INSC 311; Criminal Appeal No.245/2020 dated 07.02.2020 titled as “Chitta Biswas Alias Subhas vs. The State of West Bengal”; “Nitish Adhikary @ Bapan vs. The State of West Bengal”, Special Leave to Appeal (Crl.) No.5530-2022 dated 22.08.2022 titled as “Mohammad Salman Hanif Shaikh vs. The State of Gujarat”; Criminal Appeal No.1169 of 2022 dated 05.08.2022 titled as Gopal Krishna Patra @ Gopalrusma vs. Union of India, and Ankur Chaudhary vs. State of Madhya Pradesh, 2024(4) RCR (Criminal) 172; has held, thus:

“7.8. *The right to a speedy and expeditious trial is not only a vital safeguard to prevent undue and oppressive incarceration; to mitigate anxiety and concern accompanying the accusation as well as to curtail any impairment in the ability of an accused to defend himself, but there is an overarching societal interest paving way for a speedy trial. This right has been repeatedly actuated in the recent past and the ratio decidendi of the above-referred to Supreme Court’s judgments have laid down a series of decisions opening up new vistas of fundamental rights. The concept of speedy trial is amalgamated into the Article 21 as an essential part of the fundamental right to life and liberty, guaranteed and preserved under our Constitution. The right to speedy trial begins with the actual restraint imposed at the time of the arrest of the accused and consequent incarceration which continues at all stages, namely, the stage of investigation, inquiry, trial, appeal and revision so that any possible prejudice that may result due to impermissible and avoidable delay since the time of the commission of the offence till the criminal proceedings consummate into a finality, could be averted. The speedy trial, early hearing and quick disposal are sine qua non of criminal jurisprudence. The overcrowded Court-dockets, the heavy volume of work and the resultant pressure on the prosecution and the Police, indubitably keeps the entire criminal jurisprudential mechanism under stress and strain. However, this cannot be an excuse for keeping the sword of Damocles hanging on the accused for an indefinite period of time. It does not serve any credit to the criminal justice system, rather it makes for a sad state of affairs. The guarantee of a speedy trial is intended to avoid oppression and prevent delay by imposing on the Court and the prosecution an obligation to proceed with the trial with a reasonable dispatch. The guarantee serves a threefold purpose. Firstly, it protects the accused against oppressive pre-trial imprisonment; secondly, it relieves the accused of the anxiety and public suspicion due to unresolved criminal charges and lastly, it protects against the risk that evidence will be lost or memories dimmed by the passage of time, thus, impairing the ability of the accused to defend himself. It goes without saying that the consequences of pre-trial detention are grave. Accused, presumed innocent, till proven otherwise, are subjected to psychological and physical deprivations of jail-life, usually under onerous conditions. Equally important, the burden*

of detention of such an accused frequently falls heavily on the innocent members of his family.

There is yet another aspect of the matter which deserves consideration at this stage. The allegations in the present case relate to accused being involved in an FIR relating to commercial quantity of contraband under the NDPS Act, 1985. While considering a bail petition in a case involving commercial quantity, the Court has to keep in mind the rigours enumerated under Section 37 of NDPS Act, 1985 which mandates that Courts can grant bail to an accused only after hearing the public prosecutor and after having satisfied itself of twin conditions which are reasonable grounds for believing that the accused is not guilty of the offence charged/alleged and that, he is not likely to commit any offence while on bail. The stringent rigours of Section 37 of the NDPS Act, 1985 must be meticulously scrutinized against the backdrop of accused's fundamental right to a speedy trial. The right to life and personal liberty cannot be rendered nugatory by unwarranted delays in the judicial process, particularly where such delay(s) is neither attributable to the accused nor justified at the end of the prosecution by cogent reasons. An individual cannot be kept behind bars for an inordinate period of time by taking refuge in rigours laid down in Section 37 of the NDPS Act, 1985. The legislature in its wisdom, in order to ensure speedy and timely disposal of the cases under the Act, has provided for the constitution of special Courts under Section 36-A of the Act. However, this Court cannot turn Nelson's eye to the protracted delays and systematic inefficiency that frustrate this legislative purpose. A Court of law is duty-bound to ensure that it does not become complicit in violation of an individual's fundamental rights, notwithstanding anything contained in a statute. While dealing with bail petition in a case governed by the rigours of Section 37 of the NDPS Act, 1985, the Court must strike a judicious balance between the legislative intent to curb the menace of drugs and the sacrosanct right of the accused to a fair and expeditious trial. Prolonged incarceration, without justifiable cause, risks transforming pre-trial detention into punitive imprisonment, an outcome antithetical to the principle of justice and equity.

Ergo, the unequivocal inference is that where the trial has failed to conclude within a reasonable time, resulting in prolonged incarceration, it militates against the precious fundamental rights of life and liberty granted under the law and, as such, conditional liberty overriding the statutory embargo created under Section 37 of the NDPS Act, 1985 ought to be considered as per facts of a given case. In other words, grant of bail in a case pertaining to commercial quantity, on the ground of undue delay in trial, cannot be said to be fettered by Section 37 of the NDPS Act, 1985."

7.3. As per custody certificate dated 10.03.2026 filed by the learned State counsel, the petitioner is shown to be involved in other FIRs/cases. However, this factum cannot be a ground sufficient by itself, to decline the concession of regular bail to the petitioner in the FIR in question when a case is made out for grant of regular bail *qua* the FIR in question by

rationating upon the facts/circumstances of the said FIR. Reliance in this regard can be placed upon the judgment of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in *Maulana Mohd. Amir Rashadi v. State of U.P. and another, 2012 (1) RCR (Criminal) 586*; a Division Bench judgment of the Hon'ble Calcutta High Court in case of *Sridhar Das v. State, 1998 (2) RCR (Criminal) 477* & judgments of this Court in *CRM-M No.38822-2022* titled as *Akhilesh Singh v. State of Haryana*, decided on 29.11.2021, and *Balraj v. State of Haryana, 1998 (3) RCR (Criminal) 191*.

8. Keeping in view the factual milieu of the case in hand; the petitioner is stated to be 34 years old, having been released on interim regular bail since 27.03.2025 & there is no allegation of having misused the said concession of interim regular bail; this Court deems it fit to grant the concession of regular bail to the petitioner. Accordingly, the present petition is **allowed** and the order dated 27.03.2025 is hereby confirmed. Petitioner is ordered to be released on regular bail on his furnishing bail/surety bonds to the satisfaction of the Ld. concerned trial Court/Duty Magistrate However, in addition to conditions that may be imposed by the concerned trial Court/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 shall not change his cell-phone number without prior permission of the trial Court/Illaq Magistrate.
- (vii) The petitioner shall not in any manner try to delay the trial.

(viii) The petitioner shall submit, on the first working day of every month, an affidavit, before the concerned trial Court, to the effect that he has not been involved in commission of any offence after being released on bail. In case the petitioner is found to be involved in any offence after his being enlarged on bail in the present FIR, on the basis of his affidavit or otherwise, the State is mandated to move, forthwith, for cancellation of his bail which plea, but of course, shall be ratiocinated upon merits thereof.

9. In case of breach of any of the aforesaid conditions and those which may be imposed by concerned trial Court/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.

10. Ordered accordingly.

11. Nothing said hereinabove shall be construed as an expression of opinion on the merits of the case.

12. Since the main case has been decided, pending miscellaneous application, if any, shall also stands disposed off.

(SUMEET GOEL)
JUDGE

March 11, 2026
Naveen

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