

IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB & HARYANA
AT CHANDIGARH

2026:PHHC:036739



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CRM-M-63673-2025 (O&M)
Date of decision:10.03.2026

Satpal Singh @ Satta

... Petitioner

Vs.

State of Punjab

... Respondent

CORAM: HON'BLE MRS. JUSTICE MANISHA BATRA

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

Ms. Ruchika Sabherwal, Sr. DAG, Punjab.

...

Manisha Batra, J. (Oral).

1. The instant petition has been filed by the petitioner seeking benefit of regular bail in case arising out of FIR No.72, dated 03.05.2024, registered under Section 22(C) of the NDPS Act (offences under Section 29 and 27 of the NDPS Act were added lateron vide DDR No.23 dated 03.05.2024 and DDR No.25 dated 08.05.2024 respectively), at Police Station STF/ANTF, District SAS Nagar Mohali.

2. As per the allegations, on 03.05.2024, a secret information was received to the effect that Charanjit Singh @ Charna and Gursevak Singh @ Sevak were indulged in the sale of narcotic pills and even on that day also, they were coming from village Rattowala side in a swift car. It was informed that they were having huge quantity of narcotic pills with them and could be apprehended with the same. Believing the secret information to be true, a

raiding party was immediately formed, which reached at the informed place where the present petitioner was found present with a *Verna* car and was apprehended. On conducting search, 1500 strips of Tramadol Hydrochloride SR tablets (totalling 15000 tablets) were recovered from his conscious possession. One cell phone and a cash amount of Rs.200/- had also been recovered. The petitioner further got recovered a cash amount of Rs.1 lakhs from his house. His dope test was conducted which was found to be positive.

3. During the course of further investigation, co-accused Charanjit Singh @ Charna and Gursevak Singh @ Sevak were also apprehended and 8000 intoxicating tablets were recovered from their conscious possession. They were also arrested. They disclosed that they used to purchase the narcotic pills from the present petitioner. Investigation now stands completed.

4. It is argued by learned counsel for the petitioner that he has been falsely implicated in this case. He was not named in the FIR. A false recovery has been planted upon him. The disclosure statements of the co-accused cannot be considered to be admissible against him. The trial will take considerable time to conclude as 01 out of 45 prosecution witnesses has been examined so far. No fruitful purpose would be served by keeping him in custody anymore. It is, therefore, argued that the petitioner deserves to be released on bail.

5. Per contra, learned State counsel while relying upon the status report has argued that the allegations against the petitioner are serious in nature. Commercial quantity of the contraband was recovered at the instance of the petitioner and co-accused. Rigors of Section 37 of the NDPS Act are

attracted in this case. There are chances of the petitioner's absconding or committing similar offences, if extended benefit of bail. It is, therefore, stressed that he does not deserve to be extended the benefit of bail.

6. This Court has heard the rival submissions made by learned counsel for the parties.

7. The petitioner is in custody for over a period of 01 year and 10 months. It is apparent from the record that there are bleak chances of conclusion of trial in near future since 01 out of 45 prosecution witnesses has been examined so far. 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 Live Law (SC) 533***, wherein the Hon'ble Supreme Court had extended benefit of bail to the accused who 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.

8. 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 rigors 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 abovementioned case the Hon'ble Supreme Court 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.

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

10. 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 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.

11. 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***.

12. 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 over a period of 01 year and 10 months, the trial is not likely to be concluded in near future; 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.

13. In view of the above discussion, this Court is of the considered opinion that a case is made out for grant of bail to the petitioner. Accordingly, the petition is allowed and the petitioner is ordered to be released on bail on his furnishing personal as well as surety bonds to the extent of two sureties in the like amount each, to the satisfaction of the learned trial Court/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 Aadhar card, and shall not change his mobile number(s) during the pendency of the trial.

14. 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. Since the main petition has been allowed, pending application, if any, is rendered infructuous.

10.03.2026

harjeet

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

(MANISHA BATRA)
JUDGE