



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

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CRM-M-67046-2025 (O&M)

Date of decision : 26.02.2026

Manoj Kumar @Baba

..... Petitioner

VERSUS

State of Punjab

..... Respondent

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE SURYA PARTAP SINGH

Present : Mr. B.B.S. Randhawa, Advocate for the petitioner.

Mr. Eklavya Darshi, Deputy Advocate General, Punjab.

SURYA PARTAP SINGH, J. (oral)

This petition is the first petition for bail, filed by the petitioner under Section 483 of 'the Bharatiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita', 2023. It has been filed with regard to a case arising out of FIR No.67 dated 30.05.2025, for the commission of offence punishable under Sections 21(b) & 29 of NDPS Act [offence under Section 21(c) and 27-A NDPS Act added later on], Police Station Sadar, District Gurdaspur.

2. The FIR of this case came into being at the instance of Sub-Inspector Surjit Singh who reported an incident of chance recovery. According to prosecution on 30.05.2025 when a team of police officials headed by abovenamed SI was on patrolling duty, two persons walking together were apprehended on the basis of suspicion. According to prosecution, when search of abovementioned two persons were carried out from the possession of one of them namely Rakesh Kumar 30 gram of Heroin was recovered.



3. It is the case of the prosecution that pursuant to abovementioned recovery, the requisite formalities with regard to seizure and sealing of contraband, filing of FIR and formal arrest of the accused was taken up.

4. The custody Certificate has been filed by learned State Counsel. The same be taken on record.

5. Heard.

6. The record has been perused carefully.

7. A perusal of record shows that in the present case, following are the relevant factors which are required to be taken into consideration for a decision: -

- (i) that the recovery of contraband from the possession of petitioner comes within the ambit of non-commercial quantity, and it is far below the lower threshold fixed for commercial quantity;
- (ii) that the petitioner is already in custody for a period of more than eight and half months;
- (iii) that from the possession of petitioner nothing has been recovered;
- (iv) that the trial is not likely to be concluded in near future, as only a part of the examination of one prosecution witness, out of sixteen, has recorded so far;
- (v) that detention of petitioner in judicial lock up is not likely to serve any purpose;
- (vi) that there is nothing on record to show that if released on bail, the petitioner may tamper with the evidence or influence the witnesses; and



(vii) that there is nothing on record to show that if released on bail, the petitioner will not co-operate/participate in the trial.

8. 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(2) R.C.R. (Criminal) 131, 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".

9. The principles laid down by the Hon'ble the Supreme Court of India in the case of 'Satender Kumar Antil Vs. Central Bureau of



Investigation and Another’, (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”.

10. 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”.

11. 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 the accused as mandated by Hon’ble Apex court in “Balwinder Singh versus State of Punjab and Another”, 2024 SCC Online SC 4354.

12. If the cumulative effect of all the abovementioned factors, involved in the instant case, is taken into consideration, it leads to a conclusion that the petitioner is entitled for the benefit of bail, and that the present petition deserves to be allowed.

13. 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 abovementioned concession 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 to disclose 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 the trial Court.

(SURYA PARTAP SINGH)
JUDGE

26.02.2026

Vinod

Whether speaking / reasoned
Whether Reportable

Yes/No
Yes/No