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

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Date of Decision: 21.01.2026

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...Petitioner

Versus

State of Punjab

...Respondent

CORAM: HON'BLE MS. JUSTICE RUPINDERJIT CHAHAL

Present: Mr. Abhinav Singla, Advocate
for the petitioner.

Mr. Amit Shukla, DAG, Punjab.

RUPINDERJIT CHAHAL, J (ORAL)

1. Prayer in the instant petition filed under Section 483 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 is for grant of regular bail to the petitioner in case FIR No.70, dated 29.03.2025 registered under Sections 22, 29, 61 & 85 of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985, at Police Station Tanda, District Hoshiarpur.
2. Brief facts of the present case as per the prosecution are that on 29.03.2025, ASI Maninder Kaur, along with her fellow police officials was on patrolling duty and on suspicion, they apprehended three persons namely Abhay son of Rajesh Kumar, Navdeep Singh son of Gurbaksh Singh and Abhishek son of Sukhwinder Singh from whose conscious possession 1010 intoxicant tablets weighing 117 mg each of Alprazolam, were recovered without any permit or licence. Initially the FIR was registered against the

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said co-accused.

3. Learned counsel for the petitioner contends that the petitioner has been falsely implicated in the present case and he has no concern with the said incident. He argues that the petitioner was not named in the FIR and was only implicated on the basis of the disclosure statement of the co-accused Abhay. Learned counsel further submits that there is no material evidence on record to connect the petitioner with the crime and it is trite law that disclosure statement of co-accused in police custody, has no evidentiary value. The petitioner is in custody since 24.06.2025. Moreover, the petitioner has clean antecedents as he is not involved in any other case. No recovery is to be effected from him. The investigation in the case is complete; challan stands presented and charges have been framed. He further submits that there are total 10 prosecution witnesses, however, none has been examined till date and as such, the trial will take a long time to conclude and no useful purpose would be served by keeping him behind bars. Therefore, it is urged that the petition deserves to be allowed.

4. On the other hand, learned State counsel has filed the custody certificate, which is taken on record and while referring to the same, has vehemently opposed the prayer for grant of bail by submitting that the offence committed by the petitioner is serious in nature. He has submitted that the recovery of alleged contraband in the present case falls under the commercial quantity. However, he has not controverted the fact that the petitioner is first time offender as he is not involved in any other case.

5. A query was raised by this Court to learned State counsel as to whether apart from the disclosure statement, any material has been found



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during investigation to connect the petitioner with the recovered contraband, to which he answered that there is nothing else to connect the petitioner with the offence.

6. As far as the argument of learned counsel for the petitioner regarding nomination of accused on the basis of disclosure statement is concerned, it would be apposite to refer herein to a judgment passed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court titled as '**Tofan Singh vs. State of Tamil Nadu, AIR 2020 Supreme Court 5592**', relevant whereof reads as under:

"155. We answer the reference by stating: (i) That the officers who are invested with powers under section 53 of the NDPS Act are "police officers within the meaning of section 25 of the Evidence Act, as a result of which any confessional statement made to them would be barred under the provisions of section 25 of the Evidence Act, and cannot be taken into account in order to convict an accused under the NDPS Act (ii) That a statement recorded under section 67 of the NDPS Act cannot be used as a confessional statement in the trial of an offence under the NDPS ACT".

7. More recently, the Hon'ble Supreme Court in a judgment titled as '**Smt. Najmunisha, Abdul Hamid Chandmiya @ Ladoo Bapu Vs. State of Gujrat, Narcotics Control Bureau' 2024 INSC 290**', has reiterated the ratio decidendi of the judgment of Hon'ble Supreme Court in the case of Tofan Singh (supra).

8. The Hon'ble Supreme Court while dealing with a plea for grant of anticipatory bail in a case under NDPS Act, 1985; in a judgment titled as '**Vijay Singh vs. The State of Haryana, bearing Special Leave to Appeal (Crl.) No.(s)1266/2023 decided on 17.05.2023**' has held as under:



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"The petitioner is alleged to have committed offences under Sections 15 and 29 of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985 (hereinafter called the NDPS Act". His application for anticipatory bail was rejected by the High Court. The allegations in the FIR are that 1.7 Kg of Poppy Straw (Doda Post) was recovered from the co-accused. The petitioner concededly was not present at the spot but was named by the co-accused. That apart there is no other material to implicate the petitioner. The prosecution urges that another case with allegations of commission of offence under the NDPS Act are pending against the petitioner. It is not denied that in those proceedings he was granted bail. Having regard to these circumstances, the petitioner is directed to the enlarged on anticipatory bail, subject to such terms and conditions as the trial Court may impose. The petition is allowed. All pending applications are disposed of."

9. The petitioner is sought to be arrayed solely on the basis of disclosure statement of the co-accused. Suffice to say there is no other material available to connect the petitioner with the recovered contraband. The veracity of the disclosure statement made by the co-accused will be subject to comprehensive scrutiny during the course of the trial and same cannot be a ground to decline the concession of regular bail to the petitioner.

10. Having heard learned counsel for the parties at length and after perusing the record of the case, it is evident that the petitioner is in custody for the last more than 6 months; investigation is complete; challan stands presented; charges framed, prosecution witnesses are yet to be examined; trial is proceeding at snail's pace, and the fact that trial may take a long time to conclude, no useful purpose would be served by detaining him in further



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custody. Keeping the petitioner in further detention without the prospect of the trial being concluded in the near future would be violative of his rights under Article 21 of the Constitution of India.

11. Reliance is placed upon a judgment in the case of ***Dataram Singh vs. State of Uttar Pradesh & Anr. 2018(2) R.C.R. (Criminal) 131***, wherein Hon'ble Apex Court has held that keeping somebody behind the bars, till his guilt is proved, for an indefinite period amounts to infringement of his right to life and liberty, as enshrined under Article 21 of Constitution of India and is against the principle "*bail is a rule*" and "*jail is an exception*".

12. In view of the above, the present petition is allowed and the petitioner is ordered to be released on bail on his furnishing bail bonds/surety bonds to the satisfaction of the learned trial Court/Duty Magistrate/CJM concerned. It is clarified that nothing stated herein shall be construed as an expression of opinion on the merits of the case.

(RUPINDERJIT CHAHAL)
JUDGE

21.01.2026

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