



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

(114)

CRM-M-70471-2025 (O&M)

Date of Decision: 29.4.2026

Akashdeep Singh @ Akash

.....Petitioner

Versus

State of Punjab

.....Respondent

CORAM: HON'BLE MS. JUSTICE KIRTI SINGH

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

Ms. Aakanksha Gupta, AAG, Punjab.

KIRTI SINGH, J. (ORAL)

1. The jurisdiction of this Court under Section 483 of BNSS, 2023 has been invoked for grant of regular bail to the petitioner in case FIR No. 23 dated 02.4.2025 under Sections 137(2), 96 of BNS, 2023 (Section 64 of BNS, 2023 and Section 4 of the POCSO Act added later on), registered at Police Station Kacha Pakka, District Tarn Taran.

2. The allegation against the petitioner is that he enticed away the prosecutrix, minor daughter of the complainant, on the false pretext of marriage.

3. Learned counsel for the petitioner *inter alia* submits that the petitioner, aged 19 years, has been falsely implicated in this case on the statement of the complainant-mother of the prosecutrix. In fact, the petitioner was well known to the prosecutrix, whose age is a disputed question of fact. It is further submitted that the complainant intended to solemnize the marriage of the prosecutrix with an older individual against her wishes. Consequently, the petitioner and the prosecutrix solemnized their



to know about their marriage, she got registered the present FIR by levelling false allegations. Subsequently, the couple even filed a petition seeking protection to their life and liberty, which was duly granted by the learned Additional Sessions Judge, Amritsar vide order dated 03.04.2025. It is further submitted that there is no cogent evidence on record to establish the guilt of the petitioner. In fact, the prosecutrix had refused to get herself medically examined and had not even supported the case of the prosecution against the petitioner. The subsequent adverse statement, it is submitted, has been made only under family pressure. Learned counsel further submits that all the material witnesses stand examined before the learned trial Court. The petitioner has already undergone an actual custody of 10 months and 29 days and there is no other criminal case registered against him.

4. *Per contra*, learned State counsel has vehemently opposed the submissions made by the learned counsel for the petitioner. She states that the petitioner was actively involved in the commission of the offence. She has filed custody certificate in Court today and the same is taken on record. As per custody certificate, the petitioner has undergone an actual custody of 10 months and 29 days. The learned State counsel, on instructions from ASI Kulbir Singh, submits that in the present case, charges were framed on 18.8.2025 and out of total 13 prosecution witnesses, 03 have been examined till date. She submits that in view of the serious allegations against the petitioner, he is not entitled to the concession of regular bail.

5. Heard the rival submissions made by learned counsel for the parties.

6. Trite to say that at the stage of considering a petition seeking bail, the Court, though not required to make a roving inquiry into the



the punishment and *prima facie*, the involvement of the accused and the material on record.

7. Before proceeding, a gainful reference can be made to the observations passed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in ***Sanjay Chandra v. CBI, (2012) 1 SCC 40***, relevant paras whereof reads thus:

"21. In bail applications, generally, it has been laid down from the earliest times that the object of bail is to secure the appearance of the accused person at his trial by reasonable amount of bail. The object of bail is neither punitive nor preventative. Deprivation of liberty must be considered a punishment, unless it is required to ensure that an accused person will stand his trial when called upon. The courts owe more than verbal respect to the principle that punishment begins after conviction, and that every man is deemed to be innocent until duly tried and duly found guilty.

22. From the earliest times, it was appreciated that detention in custody pending completion of trial could be a cause of great hardship. From time to time, necessity demands that some unconvicted persons should be held in custody pending trial to secure their attendance at the trial but in such cases, "necessity" is the operative test. In this country, it would be quite contrary to the concept of personal liberty enshrined in the Constitution that any person should be punished in respect of any matter, upon which, he has not been convicted or that in any circumstances, he should be deprived of his liberty upon only the belief that he will tamper with the witnesses if left at liberty, save in the most extraordinary circumstances."

8. Reverting to the case in hand, it is borne out from the record that charges came to be framed on 18.8.2025 Yet, only 03 out of 13 cited prosecution witnesses have been examined. The pace of the proceedings, thus, indicates that the conclusion of trial is not imminent. The petitioner has already remained in actual custody for a period of 10 months and 29 days. It is also not disputed that he has no criminal antecedents and is not involved in any other case.



9. While the truthfulness or otherwise of the allegations levelled against him and the culpability, if any, would be tested and determined on the touchstone of evidence during the course of trial, the parameters governing the grant of bail necessitate a balanced consideration of the nature of accusation, the stage of the trial, the antecedents of the accused, and the likelihood of his absconding or influencing the course of justice.

10. Presently, no material has been placed on record to suggest that the petitioner poses a flight risk or that his release would impede the fair conduct of the trial, particularly when the material witnesses stand examined. Therefore, upon taking into account all the considerations stated hereinbefore, and without expressing an opinion on the merits of the case lest it may prejudice the trial, this Court is of the opinion that the continued detention of the petitioner, in the backdrop of the pace of the proceedings and the substantial period of incarceration already undergone, would not advance the cause of justice. The guarantee of personal liberty under Article 21 of the Constitution of India, which includes the right to a speedy trial, obliges the Court to ensure that pre-trial incarceration does not assume a punitive character. The prolonged incarceration, without the prospect of the trial being concluded in the near future, would also run contrary to the settled legal principle that 'bail is the rule and jail is the exception', as reaffirmed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in ***Dataram Singh vs. State of Uttar Pradesh and another (2018) 3 SCC 22.***

11. Accordingly, the present petition is allowed, and to ensure that the interests of justice are adequately safeguarded, the petitioner is ordered to be released on regular bail upon furnishing of adequate bail/surety bonds to the satisfaction of the concerned learned trial Court/Duty Magistrate,

subject to the following terms and conditions:-



- (i) The petitioner will not tamper with the evidence during the trial.
- (ii) The petitioner will not pressurize/intimidate the prosecution witness(s).
- (iii) The petitioner will appear before the trial Court on the date fixed, unless personal presence is exempted.
- (iv) The petitioner shall not commit an offence similar to the offence of which he is accused of, or for commission of which he is suspected.
- (v) 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 police officer or tamper with the evidence.

12. In case of breach of any of the above conditions, the prosecution shall be at liberty to move an application for cancellation of bail before this Court.

13. It is reiterated that the observations made in hereinabove are only for the purpose of adjudicating the present bail petition, and must not be construed as a final expression of opinion on the merits of the case.

14. Pending miscellaneous application(s), if any, also stands disposed of.

(KIRTI SINGH)
JUDGE

April 29th, 2026
Gurpreet Singh

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