



223 IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA
AT CHANDIGARH

CRM-M-16221-2025

Date of Decision: 28.04.2025

SURINDER SINGH ALIAS SHINDU

...Petitioner

Vs.

STATE OF PUNJAB

...Respondent

CORAM:- HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE SANDEEP MOUDGIL

Present: Mr. Karandeep Singh Sidhu, Advocate
for the petitioner.

Mr. Jaspal Singh Guru, AAG Punjab.

SANDEEP MOUDGIL, J. (Oral)

1. **Relief sought**

The jurisdiction of this Court has been invoked under Section 483 of BNSS, 2023 for grant of regular bail to the petitioner in FIR No. 117 dated 20.05.2021, under Sections 22 & 29 of NDPS Act 1985 [Later on added Section 181 of Motor Vehicle Act] registered at Police Station City Jalalabad, District Fazilka [Annexure P-1].

2. Prosecution story setup in the present case as per the version in the FIR as under:-

“Station House Officer, P.S. City Jalalabad. "Jai Hind". Today 1 ASI alongwith S/Ct. Rajinder Singh 1274/Fazilka, PHG Jaswant Rai 7447, PHG Satnam Singh 7514 in private vehicle in connection with patrolling and checking of bad elements were while patrolling when the police party reached a little behind the village Tiawna Kalan in front of society a clean shaven person was seen coming on a scooter from the side of village Tiwana Kalan. Who on seeing the police party got perplexed and tried to turn back his scooter but the scooter fell down on the katcha path



towards the right side. I, SI on the basis of suspicion apprehended him with the help of my associates after stopping the vehicle and asked him about his name and whereabouts. He told his name as Surinder Singh alias Shindu son of Pala Sing son of Bhagat Singh, resident of Tiwana Kalan. Then I, ASI, saw a black colour polythene envelope lying by the side of the scooter out of which some strips of intoxicant tablets were lying scattered. Surinder Singh alias Shinda by keeping in his possession these intoxicant tablets committed offence under Section 22, 61, 85 of NDPS Act. therefore, ruqa after writing was sent to the police station against Surinder Singh alias Shinda son of Pala Singh son of Bhagat Singh, resident of Tiwana Kalan for registration of case through PHG Satnam Singh 7514. Number of the case be informed after registration. Special reports be issued. PCR Fazilka be informed and for investigation of the case regular investigating officer be sent at the spot. I, ASI am busy at the spot in connection with investigation. Sd/ Makhan Singh, ASI, PS City, Jalalabad, 20.5.2021. Today in the area of in front of society, village Tiwana Kalan Road, at 8.15 A.M.

Today in the police station. On receipt of the writing first information report has been got registered under the above mentioned sections. Original writing alongwith copy of the FIR is being sent through PHG to SI Manjit Singh No. 247/FRT at the spot. Special reports after issuance are being sent through Constable Sarabjit Singh 1234/Fazilka to the Illaqa Magistrate and higher officials. PCR Fazilka has been informed through Email.”

3. **Contentions**

On behalf of the petitioner

Learned counsel for the petitioner contends that the petitioner has been falsely implicated in the present case as nothing has been recovered from the conscious possession of the petitioner and the recovery has been falsely planted upon him. He further submits that the petitioner is in custody since 24.05.2021.



On behalf of the State

On the other hand, learned State counsel has produced the custody certificate of the petitioner today in Court, which is taken on record. He seeks dismissal of the instant petition on the ground that 950 tablets of Tramadol Hydrochloride were recovered from the petitioner, and, therefore, rigors of Section 37 NDPS Act would be attracted.

4. Analysis

Be that as it may, considering the custody period i.e. 02 years 11 months and 09 days for which the petitioner has suffered sufficient incarceration; and the fact that no recovery was made from the conscious possession of the petitioner and the petitioner was nominated on the basis of secret information in addition to the fact that investigation is complete, challan stands presented to Court on 30.05.2022, charges have been framed on 16.08.2022 and out of total 08 prosecution witnesses cited only 02 have been examined, which is suffice for this Court to infer that the conclusion of trial will take long time for which the petitioner cannot be detained behind the bars for an indefinite period.

Reliance can be placed upon the judgment of the Apex Court rendered in “***Dataram versus State of Uttar Pradesh and another***”, 2018(2) ***R.C.R. (Criminal) 131***, wherein it has been held that the grant of bail is a general rule and putting persons in jail or in prison or in correction home is an exception. Relevant paras of the said judgment is reproduced as under:-

“2. 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.

3. 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.

4. While so introspecting, among the factors that need to be considered is whether the accused was arrested during investigations when that person perhaps has the best opportunity to tamper with the evidence or influence witnesses. If the investigating officer does not find it necessary to arrest an accused person during investigations, a strong case should be made out for placing that person in judicial custody after a charge sheet is filed. Similarly, it is important to ascertain whether the accused was participating in the investigations to the satisfaction of the investigating officer and was not absconding or not appearing when required by the investigating officer. Surely, if an accused is not hiding from the investigating officer or is hiding due to some genuine and expressed fear of being victimised, it would be a factor that a judge would need to consider in an appropriate case. It is also necessary for the judge to consider whether the accused is a first-time offender or has been accused of other offences and if so, the nature of such offences and his or her general conduct. The poverty or the deemed indigent status of an accused is also an extremely important factor and even Parliament has taken notice of it by incorporating an Explanation to section 436 of the Code of



Criminal Procedure, 1973. An equally soft approach to incarceration has been taken by Parliament by inserting section 436A in the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973.

5. To put it shortly, a humane attitude is required to be adopted by a judge, while dealing with an application for remanding a suspect or an accused person to police custody or judicial custody. There are several reasons for this including maintaining the dignity of an accused person, howsoever poor that person might be, the requirements of Article 21 of the Constitution and the fact that there is enormous overcrowding in prisons, leading to social and other problems as noticed by this Court in In Re-Inhuman Conditions in 1382 Prisons, 2017(4) RCR (Criminal) 416: 2017(5) Recent Apex Judgments (R.A.J.) 408 : (2017) 10 SCC 658

6. The historical background of the provision for bail has been elaborately and lucidly explained in a recent decision delivered in Nikesh Tara chand Shah v. Union of India, 2017 (13) SCALE 609 going back to the days of the Magna Carta. In that decision, reference was made to Gurbaksh Singh Sibbia v. State of Punjab, (1980) 2 SCC 565 in which it is observed that it was held way back in Nagendra v. King-Emperor, AIR 1924 Calcutta 476 that bail is not to be withheld as a punishment. Reference was also made to Emperor v. Hutchinson, AIR 1931 Allahabad 356 wherein it was observed that grant of bail is the rule and refusal is the exception. The provision for bail is therefore age-old and the liberal interpretation to the provision for bail is almost a century old, going back to colonial days.

7. However, we should not be understood to mean that bail should be granted in every case. The grant or refusal of bail is entirely within the discretion of the judge hearing the matter and though that discretion is unfettered, it must be exercised judiciously and in a humane manner and compassionately. Also, conditions for the grant of bail ought not to be so strict as to be incapable of compliance, thereby making the grant of bail illusory.”

Therefore, 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 is the mandate of the Apex court in “*Hussainara Khatoon and ors (IV) v. Home Secretary, State of Bihar, Patna*”, (1980) 1 SCC 98.

Besides this, reference can be drawn upon that pre-conviction period of the under-trials should be as short as possible keeping in view the nature of accusation and the severity of punishment in case of conviction and the nature of supporting evidence, reasonable apprehension of tampering with the witness or apprehension of threat to the complainant.

As far as the pendency of other cases and involvement of the petitioner in other cases is concerned, reliance can be placed upon the order of this Court rendered in CRM-M-25914-2022 titled as “*Baljinder Singh alias Rock vs. State of Punjab*” decided on 02.03.2023, wherein, while referring Article 21 of the Constitution of India, this Court has held that no doubt, at the time of granting bail, the criminal antecedents of the petitioner are to be looked into but at the same time it is equally true that the appreciation of evidence during the course of trial has to be looked into with reference to the evidence in that case alone and not with respect to the evidence in the other pending cases. In such eventuality, strict adherence to the rule of denial of bail on account of pendency of other cases/convictions in all probability would land the petitioner in a situation of denial of concession of bail.

5. **DECISION:**

In view of the discussions made hereinabove, the petitioner is hereby directed to be released on regular bail on his furnishing bail and



surety bonds to the satisfaction of the trial Court/Duty Magistrate, concerned.

In the afore-said terms, the present petition is hereby allowed.

However, it is made clear that anything stated hereinabove shall not be construed as an expression of opinion on the merits of the case.

(SANDEEP MOUDGIL)
JUDGE

28.04.2025

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