

CRM-M-38747-2025

IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA
AT CHANDIGARH

CRM-M-38747-2025
Reserved on: 05.08.2025
Pronounced on: 22.08.2025

Satpal Khan

...Petitioner

Versus

State of Punjab

...Respondent

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE ANOOP CHITKARA

Present: Mr. Abdul Aziz, Advocate
for the petitioner.

Ms. Pooja Nayar Sharma, DAG, Punjab.

ANOOP CHITKARA, J.

FIR No.	Dated	Police Station	Sections
89	11.12.2023	Kheri Gandian, District Patiala	22 of NDPS Act

1. The petitioner incarcerated in the FIR captioned above had come up before this Court under Section 439 CrPC, seeking regular bail.
2. In paragraph 17 of the bail petition and para 11 of the status report, the petitioner has no criminal antecedents.
3. The facts and allegations are taken from the reply filed by the State. On 11.12.2023 based on a chance recovery, the Police seized 19 strips of intoxicant tablets (total 1140 tablets) from the petitioner's possession. The Investigator claims to have complied with all the statutory requirements of the NDPS Act, 1985, and CrPC, 1973.
4. The petitioner's counsel seeks bail on the grounds of prolonged pretrial custody.
5. The petitioner's counsel prays for bail by imposing any stringent conditions and contends that further pre-trial incarceration would cause an irreversible injustice to the petitioner and their family.
6. The State's counsel opposes bail and refers to the reply.

REASONING:

7. As per paragraph 6 of the reply, the name of the salt in the contraband is Diphenoxylate Hydrochloride and Atropine Sulphate and its weight is 72.96 grams

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grams, and it constitutes an offense under the following provisions and notifications:

Substance Name	Diphenoxylate
Quantity detained	72.96 Gram
Quantity type	Commercial
<i>Drug Quantity in % to upper limit of Intermediate</i>	145.92%

<i>Drug's Small & Commercial Qty. suggested by Committee report</i>	
Notification No. & date	Expert Committee Report dated 24.03.1995 & 23.08.2001 (Small and Commercial)

<i>Specified as small & Commercial in S.2(viia) & 2(xxiii) NDPS Act, 1985</i>		
Notification No. & dated	S.O.1055(E)	10/19/2001
-		
Sr. No.	44	
Common Name (Name of Narcotic Drug and Psychotropic Substance (International non-proprietary name (INN))	Diphenoxylate	
Other non-proprietary name	*****	
Chemical Name	1-(3-cyano-3,3-diphenylpropyl)-4-phenylpiperidine-4-carboxylic acid ethyl ester	
Small Quantity	< 2 Gram	
Commercial Quantity	> 50 Gram	

Declared as punishable under NDPS Act and as per schedule defined in S.2(xi) & 2(xxiii) NDPS Act, 1985		
Notification No. & dated	S.O.826(E)	11/14/1985

Sr. No.	58	
Common Name (Name of Narcotic Drug and Psychotropic Substance (International non-proprietary name (INN))	DIPHENOXYLATE	
Other non-proprietary name	*****	
Chemical Name	Ethyl 1-(3-Cyano-3, 3-diphenylpropyl)-4-phenylpiperidine-4-carboxylic acid ethyl	

	<p>ester (the international non-proprietary name of which is Diphenoxylate), and its salts, preparations, admixtures, extracts and other substances containing any of these drugs, except preparations of diphnoxylyate containing, per dosage unit, not more than 2.5 mg. of diphenoxylate calculated as base, and a quantity of atrophine sulphate equivalent to at least one per cent of the dose of diphenoxylate.</p>
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8. The quantity allegedly involved in this case is commercial. Given this, the rigors of S. 37 of the NDPS Act apply in the present case. The petitioner must satisfy the twin conditions set forth by the Legislature under Section 37 of the NDPS Act.

9. The petitioner is entitled to bail because, in somewhat similar cases where the quantity involved was either greater than or close to the amount seized in the current FIR, the Hon'ble Supreme Court has granted bail after prolonged custody, as demonstrated by the following judicial precedent:

10. In *Ajay Khatri v. The State of Rajasthan*, decided on 20-03-2025, SLP (Crl) No. 1228-2025, the Hon'ble Supreme Court holds,

The case of the prosecution is that 6600 Alprazolam Tablets weighing 818.4 grams have been recovered from his possession. He has already undergone more than one year in jail.

Considering the period of incarceration of the petitioner, we are of the opinion that a case of bail is made out for the petitioner and therefore, the prayer for bail is allowed.

11. Per the custody certificate dated 04.08.2025 the petitioner's custody in this FIR is of 01 year, 07 months & 20 days.

12. The prolonged incarceration, generally militates against the most precious fundamental right guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution and in such a situation, the conditional liberty must override the statutory embargo created under Section 37(1)(b)(ii) of the NDPS Act¹.

13. Following the judicial precedent mentioned above, without commenting on the case's merits, and considering the petitioner's pre-trial custody, the weight of the drugs, coupled with the other factors peculiar to this case, further pre-trial incarceration is not justified at this stage. However, this order shall take effect from the time it is uploaded to

¹ Supreme Court of India, in *Rabi Prakash v. The State of Odisha*, SLP (Crl) 4169-2023, Para 4, decided on 13 July 2023

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this Court's official webpage.

CONDITIONS:

14. Given above, provided the petitioner is not required in any other case, the petitioner shall be released on bail in the FIR captioned above, subject to furnishing bonds to the satisfaction of the concerned Court and due to unavailability before any nearest Ilaqa Magistrate or duty Magistrate. Before accepting the surety, the concerned Court must be satisfied that if the accused fails to appear, such surety can produce the accused.

15. While furnishing a personal bond, the petitioner shall mention the following personal identification details:

1.	AADHAR number
2.	Passport number (If available) and when the attesting officer/court considers it appropriate or considers the accused a flight risk.
3.	Mobile number (If available)
4.	E-Mail id (If available)

16. This order is subject to the petitioner's complying with the following terms.

17. The petitioner shall abide by all statutory bond conditions and appear before the concerned Court(s) on all dates. The petitioner shall not tamper with the evidence, influence, browbeat, pressurize, induce, threaten, or promise, directly or indirectly, any witnesses, Police officials, or any other person acquainted with the facts and circumstances of the case or dissuade them from disclosing such facts to the Police or the Court.

18. Given the background of allegations against the petitioner, it becomes paramount to protect the members of society, detection squad and incapacitating the accused would be one of the primary options until the filing of the closure report or discharge, or acquittal. Consequently, it would be appropriate to restrict the possession of firearms. [This restriction is being imposed based on the preponderance of the evidence of probability and not of evidence of certainty, i.e., beyond a reasonable doubt; and as such, it is not to be construed as an intermediate sanction]. Given the nature of the allegations and the other circumstances peculiar to this case, the petitioner shall surrender all weapons, firearms, and ammunition, if any, along with the arms license to the concerned authority within fifteen days of release from prison and inform the Investigator of the compliance. However, subject to the Indian Arms Act, 1959, the petitioner shall be entitled to renew and reclaim them in case of acquittal in this case, provided otherwise permissible under the concerned rules. Restricting firearms would instill confidence in society; it would also restrain the accused from influencing the witnesses and repeating the offense.

19. The conditions mentioned above imposed by this court are to endeavor to reform and ensure the accused does not repeat the offense, and also to block the menace of drug abuse. In *Mohammed Zubair v. State of NCT of Delhi*, 2022:INSC:735 [Para 28], Writ

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Petition (Criminal) No. 279 of 2022, Para 29, decided on July 20, 2022, A Three-Judge bench of the Hon'ble Supreme Court held that "The bail conditions imposed by the Court must not only have a nexus to the purpose that they seek to serve but must also be proportional to the purpose of imposing them. The courts, while imposing bail conditions, must balance the liberty of the accused and the necessity of a fair trial. While doing so, conditions that would result in the deprivation of rights and liberties must be eschewed."

20. In *Md. Tajiur Rahaman v. The State of West Bengal*, decided on 08-Nov-2024, SLP (Crl) 12225-2024, the Hon'ble Supreme Court holds in Para 7, "It goes without saying that if the petitioner is found involved in such like offence in future, the concession of bail granted to him today will liable to be withdrawn and the petitioner is bound to face the necessary consequences."

21. This bail is conditional, with the foundational condition being that if the petitioner repeats the offense where the quantity involved is more than half of the intermediate, or commercial, or violates S. 19, 24, or 27-A of the NDPS Act, or commits any non-bailable offense which provides for a sentence of imprisonment for more than seven years, the State shall file an application to revoke this bail before the concerned Court having jurisdiction over this FIR, which shall have the authority to cancel this bail, and as per their discretion, they may cancel this bail.

22. Any observation made hereinabove is neither an expression of opinion on the case's merits nor shall the trial Court advert to these comments.

23. In *Amit Rana v. State of Haryana*, CRM-18469-2025 [in CRA-D-123-2020, decided on 05.08.2025], a Division Bench of Punjab and Haryana High Court in paragraph 13, holds that "To ensure that every person in judicial custody who has been granted bail or whose sentence has been suspended gets back their liberty without any delay, it is appropriate that whenever the bail order or the orders of suspension of sentence are not immediately sent by the Registry, computer systems, or Public Prosecutor, then in such a situation, to facilitate the immediate restoration of the liberty granted by any Court, the downloaded copies of all such orders, subject to verification, must be accepted by the Court before whom the bail bonds are furnished."

24. Petition allowed in terms mentioned above. All pending applications, if any, are disposed of.

(ANOOP CHITKARA)
JUDGE

22.08.2025

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Whether speaking/reasoned: Yes

Whether reportable: No.