

2025:PHHC:079166



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

**CRM-M-30580-2025
DECIDED ON: 04.07.2025**

SUKHWINDER SINGH

.....PETITIONER

VERSUS

STATE OF PUNJAB

.....RESPONDENT

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE SANDEEP MOUDGIL

Present: Mr. Naveen Batra, Advocate
for the petitioner.

Mr. Jasjit Singh Rattu, DAG Punjab.

SANDEEP MOUDGIL, J (ORAL)

1. Prayer

The jurisdiction of this Court has been invoked for the 2nd time under Section 483 BNSS, 2023 seeking regular bail to the petitioner in case FIR No.42 dated 08.06.2024 Under Section 420,465,467,468,471,34 of IPC and later on added Section 419/201 of IPC and deleted Section 467 of IPC Police Station, Valotha District Tarn Taran (Annexure P-1).

2. Facts

Facts as narrated in the FIR reads as under:-

“Statement of Sukhwinder Singh son of Hari Singh resident of Mehmoodpura Police Station Valtoha aged about 39 years mobile No. 98147- 66316, I would like to state that I am resident of above noted address and I am agriculturist by occupation. I have my bank account No. 18241740000767 in HDFC Bank Amarkot and my mobile No. 98147-66316 is attached with my said mobile and Aadhar Card is also attached. The amount received from selling of crop and other

amount are deposited in this account and there were Rs. 431771/- in this account. The ATM and Passbook, cheque book of this account is with me and I am using the same. ON 04.05.2024 I went to bank to withdraw the amount from my said account then I came to know that only Rs. 548/- is balance in my account, then immediately approached the manager of Bank and I came to know from him that mobile No. 73409-44331 is attached with this account and when I inquired about this mobile number, then I came to know that this mobile number belong to Sukhwinder Singh son of Harbans Singh resident of street No. 01, Bhola STD, Milap Avenue, Kaley Ghannupr road Amritsar, PIN Code 143105. The said person in connivance with Arun Som Bank Manger o HDFC Bank branch Chhehrta road Amritsar and Kamalpreet Singh Operation manger son of Shiv Kumar resident of H. No. 67, Sardar Avenue Majitha road Amritsar and Panäky Kumar personal Manager son of Yudhvir Singh resident of H. No. 123, New Dashmesh Nagar, Chhehrta has prepared the fake documents of my this bank account and got issued the duplicate pass book and ATM and has withdrawn the amount of Rs. 431223/- from this account through ATM on different dates and I also came to know that Sukhwinder Singh is not having any account in said HDFC Bank, Chhehrta Amritsar. I have presented the photocopy of my statement of my bank ar count, legal action be taken against the said persons. Statement got recorded, heard, same is correct. Sd/- Sukhwinder Singh supported by Sd/- Sukhwant Singh, attested by Sd/- Avtar Singh, ASI, Police Station Waltoha. Police proceedings: Today myself ASI along with ASI Savinderpal Singh No. 641/TT. CT Sandeep Singh No. 69/TT, CT Satpreet Singh No. 281/ITT on private vehicle were present at bus stand Amarkot in connection with patrolling and search of bad elements then Sukhwinder Singh son of Hari Singh resident of Mehmoodpura Police Station Valoha along with his brother Sukhwant Singh came present and got recorded his statement. After recording his statement, he has appended his signature in Punjabi and ASI Avtar Singh has attested the same, as per the content of statement, offence under section 420,465,467,468,471, 34 of IPC, made out. Therefore after writing the police proceedings and taking print out, the statement is being sent to the Police Station by the hand of Ct Satprect Singh for registration of case under above said sections against accused Sukhwinder Singh son of Harbans Singh resident of Street No. 1 Milap Avenue Kaley Ghannupur, Chhehrta District Amritsar, HDFC Bank Manager Arun Soni, Chhehrta roads Amritsar, Karmalpreet Singh Operation Manager, son of Shiv Kumar resident of H. No. 67 Sardar Avenue, Majitha Road Amritsar. Pankaj.”

3. Contentions:**On behalf of the petitioner**

Learned counsel for the petitioner contends that the amount in question already stands recovered, as it was returned to the complainant by the petitioner's sister. In support of this assertion, reliance has been placed on an affidavit executed by the complainant, Sukhwinder Singh, son of Shri Hari Singh, resident of Mehmudpura, Tehsil Patti, District Tarn Taran, bearing Aadhaar No. 4112-6283-8709. It is further submitted that the investigation in the matter stands concluded and no further recovery is to be effected from the petitioner.

On behalf of the State

On the other hand, learned State Counsel has filed the custody certificate of the petitioner, which is taken on record. According to which, the petitioner is behind bars for 1 year 21 days.

Learned State Counsel prays for dismissal of the present petition stating that the allegations against the petitioner are serious in nature as he cheated the complainant.

4. Analysis

Considering the facts that the amount of Rs.4,31,223/- has been returned to the complainant by the sister of the petitioner; the petitioner is in custody since 11.06.2024 and not involved in any other case added with the fact that investigation is complete, challan stands presented on 06.09.2024, charges have been framed on 24.12.2024 and out of total 10 prosecution witnesses, none has been examined so far, which is sufficient for this Court to infer that conclusion of trial shall take considerable time, therefore, this Court is of the view that no useful purpose would be served by keeping the petitioner behind bars for uncertain period, wherein "*bail is a rule and jail is an exception*" and it would also violate

the principle of right to speedy trial and expeditious disposal under Article 21 of Constitution of India, as has been time and again discussed by this Court, while relying upon the judgment of the Apex Court passed in ***Dataram Singh vs. State of Uttar Pradesh & Anr. 2018(2) R.C.R. (Criminal) 131***. 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 “Balwinder Singh versus State of Punjab and Another”, SLP (Crl.) No.8523/2024. Relevant paras of the said judgment reads as under:-

“7. An accused has a right to a fair trial and while a hurried trial is frowned upon as it may not give sufficient time to prepare for the defence, an inordinate delay in conclusion of the trial would infringe the right of an accused guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution.

8. It is not for nothing the Author Oscar Wilde in “The Ballad of Reading Gaol”, wrote the following poignant lines while being incarcerated:

*“I know not whether Laws be right,
Or whether Laws be wrong;
All that we know who be in jail
Is that the wall is strong;
And that each day is like a year,
A year whose days are long.”*

5. **Relief:**

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

04.07.2025

Meenu

Whether speaking/reasoned :Yes/No

Whether reportable :Yes/No