

IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA
AT CHANDIGARH

CRM-M-33531-2025
Reserved on: 14.07.2025
Pronounced on: 29.07.2025

Nagar Singh @ Gurcharan Singh ...Petitioner

Versus

State of Punjab ...Respondent

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE ANOOP CHITKARA

Present: Mr. Jashandeep Singh Sandhu, Advocate,
for the petitioner.

Mr. Jasdev Singh Thind, DAG, Punjab.

ANOOP CHITKARA, J.

FIR No.	Dated	Police Station	Section
175	08.10.2022	Vairoke, Distt. Fazilka	15 of NDPS Act

1. The petitioner incarcerated in the FIR captioned above had come up before this Court fourth time under Section 483 of Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023, [BNSS], seeking regular bail.

2. As per paragraph 13 of the bail application and as per paragraph 10 of the status report, the accused has the following criminal antecedents:

Sr. No.	FIR No.	Dated	Offenses	Police Station
1.	130	20.06.2001	61, 1, 14 of Excise Act	Sadar Jalalabad
2.	65	19.03.2003	61, 1, 14 of Excise Act	Sadar Jalalabad
3.	272	25.09.2004	61, 1, 14 of Excise Act	Sadar Jalalabad
4.	293	11.10.2004	61, 1, 14 of Excise Act	Sadar Jalalabad
5.	310	24.10.2004	61, 1, 14 of Excise Act	Sadar Jalalabad
6.	173	24.11.2021	61, 1, 14 of Excise Act	Vairo Ke
7.	181	09.12.2021	61, 1, 14 of Excise Act	Vairo ke
8.	71	22.08.2018	21/25/61/85 of NDPS Act	Vairo Ke

3. The facts and allegations are taken from the status report filed by the State. On 08.10.2022, based on secret information, the Police seized 63 kgs of poppy husk 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 his family.

6. The petitioner’s counsel submits that the petitioner would have no objection whatsoever to any stringent conditions that this Court may impose, including that if the petitioner repeats the offense or commits any non-bailable offense which provides for a sentence of imprisonment for more than seven years, or commits any offence under the NDPS Act, where the quantity involved is more than half of the intermediate, or commercial quantity, or violates S. 19, or 24, or 27-A of the NDPS Act, the State may file an application to revoke this bail before the concerned Special Judge or Sessions Court having jurisdiction over this FIR, which shall have the authority to cancel this bail, and may do so at their discretion, to which the petitioner shall have no objection.

7. The State’s counsel opposes bail and refers to para 6 of the status report. It would be appropriate to reproduce para 6 of the status report, which reads as under:

*“Name and Total Weight of the Drug:
6. That in the present case, 63 kg poppy husk was recovered from the petitioner.”*

REASONING:

8. Dealing with this contraband is an offence under the following provisions and notifications:

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

<i>Specified as small & Commercial in S.2(viia) & 2(xviii) NDPS Act, 1985</i>		
Notification No. & dated	S.O.1055(E)	10/19/2001
Sr. No.	110	
Common Name (Name of Narcotic Drug and Psychotropic Substance (International non-proprietary name (INN))	Poppy straw	
Other non-proprietary name	*****	
Chemical Name	*****	
Small Quantity	1 KG	

Commercial Quantity	50 KG
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Declared as punishable under NDPS Act and as per schedule defined in S.2(xi) & 2(xxiii) NDPS Act, 1985		
Notification No. & dated	S.15 & S.2(xviii) NDPS Act, S.O.821(E)	11/14/1985

Sr. No.	S.2(xviii)
Common Name (Name of Narcotic Drug and Psychotropic Substance (International non-proprietary name (INN))	*****
Other non-proprietary name	*****
Chemical Name	<p>S.2(xviii) “poppy straw” means all parts (except the seeds) of the opium poppy after harvesting whether in their original form or cut, crushed or powdered and whether or not juice has been extracted therefrom; S. 2(viiiib)] “illicit traffic”, in relation to narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, means—</p> <p>(i) cultivating any coca plant or gathering any portion of coca plant;</p> <p>(ii) cultivating the opium poppy or any cannabis plant;</p> <p>(iii) engaging in the production, manufacture, possession, sale, purchase, transportation, warehousing, concealment, use or consumption, import inter-State, export inter-State, import into India, export from India or transshipment, of narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances; S.2 (xvii) “opium poppy” means—</p> <p>(a) the plant of the species <i>Papaver somniferum</i> L; and</p> <p>(b) the plant of any other species of <i>Papaver</i> from which opium or any phenanthrene alkaloid can be extracted and which the Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, declare to be opium poppy for the purposes of this Act;</p> <p>S2. (xviii) “poppy straw” means all parts (except the seeds) of the opium poppy after harvesting whether in their original form or cut, crushed or powdered and whether or not juice has been extracted therefrom;</p>

9. 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.

10. The petitioner is entitled to bail because for the same drug, and when the quantity involved was either more or closer to the quantity seized in the present FIR, the Hon'ble Supreme Court has granted bail on prolonged custody in the following judicial precedent:

11. In *Shambhulal Gurjar v. State of Rajasthan*, Decided on 23-04-2024, SLP (Crl) 16671-2024, Hon'ble Supreme Court holds,

The allegation against the petitioner is that there is a recovery of 60 kgs of poppy husk/straw (contraband article) from him and prior to this incident, he has three criminal antecedents relating to the NDPS Act registered in the year 2019, 2021 & 2022. The third bail application of the petitioner was dismissed by the High Court. He has already undergone about 1 year and 8 months in jail.

Heard learned counsel for the petitioner and the respondent State.

Considering the fact that the contraband article is a poppy straw although he has three criminal antecedents but since he has been in jail for the last 1 year and 8 months, we are of the opinion that a case of bail is made out for the petitioner.

12. Given this, the criminal antecedents are also not legal grounds for denying the rigors of S. 37 of the NDPS Act at this stage.

13. As per the custody certificate dated 12.07.2025, the petitioner's custody in this FIR is of 02 years and 24 days.

14. 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.

15. 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.

CONDITIONS:

16. 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

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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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.

17. 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)

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

19. 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.

20. 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 the victim(s), their families, and society; it would also restrain the accused from influencing the witnesses and repeating the offense.

21. 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 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.”

22. 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.”

23. The significant consideration for granting bail is that the Court aims to give the petitioner another chance to course-correct, reform, and reintegrate into the community as an ideal citizen. To ensure that the petitioner also abides by the assurance made on the petitioner’s behalf by not repeating the offence or indulging in any crime, it shall be desirable to impose the following additional condition.

24. 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 may file an application to revoke this bail before the Special Judge/ Sessions 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.

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

26. A certified copy of this order is not required for furnishing bonds. An Advocate for the Petitioner can download the order from the Court's official web page and attest it as a true copy. If needed, the attesting officer can verify its authenticity online and use the downloaded copy to attest bonds.

27. **Petition allowed** in terms mentioned above. All pending applications, if any, stand disposed of.

(ANOOP CHITKARA)
JUDGE

29.07.2025

Jyoti-II

Whether speaking/reasoned: Yes
Whether reportable: No.