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

CRM-M-11936-2025
Reserved on: 06.08.2025
Pronounced on: 27.08.2025

Malkeet Singh @ Meet ...Petitioner

Versus

State of Punjab ...Respondent

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE ANOOP CHITKARA

Present: Mr. Vaibhav Jain, Advocate
for the petitioner.

Mr. Jasdev Singh Thind, DAG, Punjab.

ANOOP CHITKARA, J.

FIR No.	Dated	Police Station	Sections
126	23.08.2024	STF Wing, District SAS Nagar	21-C/29 of NDPS Act and 25/27 of Arms Act

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

2. Per paragraph 6 of the bail petition as well as custody certificated dated 05.08.2025 and para 14 of the status report, the petitioner has the following criminal antecedents:

Sr. No.	FIR No.	Date	Offenses	Police Station
1	84	31.07.2024	303(2)/338/336(2)/340/317(2)/238 BNS 2023	Majitha
2	46	19.09.2011	18/61/85 of NDPS Act	Jhander
3	09	05.02.2019	394/120B/34 IPC and 25/54/59 of Arms Act	Dera Baba Nanak
4	27	02.05.2018	394/392/379-B/34 IPC	Kila Lal Singh
5	136	02.08.2021	21/22/61/85 of NDPS act	Majitha
6	441	14.12.2021	21B/61/85 of NDPS Act and 42/52 A of Prison Act	Islamabad
7	06	02.01.2022	42/52A of Prison Act	Islamabad
8	115	07.04.2022	42/52A of Prison Act	Islamabad
9	32	2017	21/29/85 of NDPS Act	---

3. The facts and allegations are being taken from the reply filed by the State, which reads as follows:

“4. That the present FIR was registered on the basis of secret information received by ASI Amandeep Singh that Kikki, XXX, Meet

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and Fauji were involved in the business of selling Heroin, were going that day to supply Heroin on the slip road opposite Marebella Hotel and Resort going from Jalandhar By-pass to Airport Road G.T. Road and were waiting in their white coloured Creta Car bearing NO. PB-02-ES-9913 and white Swift Dezire bearing No.PB-18-S-5340 for their customers. That, if raid was conducted then they can be apprehended with heavy quantity of Heroin. Upon which report under Section 42 of NDPS Act, was sent by ASI Amandeep Singh to AIG, STF, Jalandhar Range and shared the received information with his colleagues. Thereupon, the police party reached the spot as informed by the secret informer and when they slowed down their vehicle then the person standing outside swift car in his revolver at the police vehicle and came in front of the police vehicle. When breaks were applied suddenly to prevent injury to the said person, the car hit him and the revolver fell down upon which he was apprehended and one other person sitting in swift and two persons were sitting in Creta Car were apprehended and asked their identities. The person who had aimed the revolver stated his name as Gurcharan Singh @ Kiki and the person sitting in the Swift car stated his name as XXX and the Creta driver stated his name as Wassan Singh @ Fauji and the person sitting next to him stated his name as Malkeet Singh @ Meet (petitioner).

5. Thereupon, investigating Officer was requested at the spot by ASI Amandeep Singh, and ASI Parminder Singh reached at the spot. ASI Parminder Singh then asked their identities and informed them regarding his name and rank and their legal right under Section 50 of NDPS Act. Separate Notices under Section 50 of NDPS Act were then served to the apprehended persons and were duly prepared by ASI Parminder Singh which were then signed by them. Thereafter, the deponent called on the spot by ASI Parminder Singh after the deponent reached at the spot ASI Parminder Singh took the aforesaid revolver (which was in possession of Gurcharan Singh @ Kiki) and emptied the same and took the said revolver.32 bore No. FG86247 along with 3 live cartridges into police possession vide recovery memo dated 23.08.2024 and prepared separate parcels of the same.”

4. 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. Counsel further 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 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.

5. The State's counsel opposes bail and refers to the reply.

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6. It would be appropriate to refer to the following portions of the reply, which read as follows:

“Role of the petitioner and evidence against him

11. That the petitioner was present at the spot with the other co-accused namely Gurcharan Singh alias Kiki, XXX, Wassan Singh @ Fauji who were all in possession of commercial quantities of Heroin and illegal arms. Thus, the petitioner was in conscious possession of the same as he was travelling in the said Creta car alongwith co-accused Wassan Singh @ Fauji from whom one pistol along with 08 live cartridges and 260 gm Heroin was recovered.”

REASONING:

7. Counsel for the petitioner submits that the petitioner was not in conscious possession because the recovery is from car, however this argument is baseless for the reason that petitioner was sitting in the car from where drugs were recovered. In addition to drugs, weapons were also recovered. Perusal of the petition does not satisfy the rigors of Section 37 of NDPS Act which places reverse burden on the accused in case of commercial quantity.

8. There is sufficient prima facie evidence connecting the petitioner with the alleged crime.

9. Per the custody certificate dated 05.08.2025, the petitioner’s total custody in this FIR is 11 months & 10 days.

10. Dealing in 260 grams of Heroin in contravention of the NDPS Act, 1985, constitutes an offense under the following provisions and notifications:

Substance Name	Heroin/ Chitta/ Smack/ Brown Sugar/ Diacetylmorphine
Quantity detained	260 Gram
Punishable U/s	S.21(c) of NDPS Act, 1985
Quantity type	Commercial

Drug's Small & Commercial Qty. suggested by Committee report	
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

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Sr. No.	56
Common Name (Name of Narcotic Drug and Psychotropic Substance (International non-proprietary name (INN)	Heroin
Other non-proprietary name	*****
Chemical Name	Diacetylmorphine
Small Quantity	< 5 Gram
Commercial Quantity	> 250 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.(xvi)(d) NDPS Act, 1985 (61 of 1985), S.O. 821 (E)	11/14/1985

Sr. No.	2(xvi)(d)
Common Name (Name of Narcotic Drug and Psychotropic Substance (International non-proprietary name (INN)	*****
Other non-proprietary name	*****
Chemical Name	<p>2(xvi)(d) diacetylmorphine, that is, the alkaloid also known as dia-morphine or heroin and its salts;</p> <p>Explanation.-- For the purposes of clauses (v) (vi), (xv) and (xvi) the percentages in the case of liquid preparations shall be calculated on the basis that a preparation containing one per cent. of a substance means a preparation in which one gram of substance, if solid, or one millilitre of substance, if liquid, is contained in every one hundred millilitre of the preparation and so on in proportion for any greater or less percentage:</p> <p>Provided that the Central Government may, having regard to the developments in the field of methods of calculating percentages in liquid preparations prescribed, by rules, any other basis which it may deem appropriate for such calculation.</p>

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11. 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 put in place by the Legislature under Section 37 of the NDPS Act.

12. Section 37¹ of the NDPS Act mandates under sub-section (1) (b) of section 37 that no person accused of an offense punishable for offenses involving commercial quantity shall be released on bail unless- (i) the Public Prosecutor has been given an opportunity to oppose the application of release, and (ii) where the Public Prosecutor opposes the application, the Court is satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for believing that accused is not guilty of such offense and is not likely to commit any offense while on bail. Thus, the rigors of S. 37 of the NDPS Act apply in the present case, and the burden is on the petitioner to satisfy the twin conditions put in place by the Legislature under Section 37 of the NDPS Act. Given the legislative mandate of S. 37 of the NDPS Act, the Court can release a person accused of an offense punishable under the NDPS Act for possessing a commercial quantity of contraband only after recording reasonable satisfaction of its rigors.

13. The State's Counsel argues that a plain reading of Section 37 reveals that the legislature intends to make the law stringent to curb the drug menace. It is further to be noticed that the provisions are couched in negative language, meaning that to grant bail, the Court needs to record a finding that there are reasonable grounds for believing that the petitioner is not guilty of the offense. The burden of proof is also on the petitioner to satisfy the Court about his non-involvement in the case. While interpreting the provisions of Section 37 of the NDPS Act, the Court must be guided by the objective sought to be achieved by putting these stringent conditions.

14. Satisfying the fetters of S. 37 of the NDPS Act is candling the infertile eggs. The stringent conditions of section 37 placed in the statute by the legislature do not create a bar for bail for specified categories, including the commercial quantity; however, it creates hurdles by placing a reverse burden on the accused, and once crossed, the rigors no more exist, and the factors for bail become similar to the bail petitions under general penal statutes like IPC. Thus, both the twin conditions need to be satisfied before a person accused of possessing a commercial quantity of drugs or psychotropic substance is to be released on bail. The first condition is to provide an opportunity to the Public

¹ **37. Offences to be cognizable and non-bailable.**—(1) Notwithstanding anything contained in the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (2 of 1974),—

(a) every offence punishable under this Act shall be cognizable;

(b) no person accused of an offence punishable for offences under section 19 or section 24 or section 27A and also for offences involving commercial quantity shall be released on bail or on his own bond unless—
(i) the Public Prosecutor has been given an opportunity to oppose the application for such release, and (ii) where the Public Prosecutor opposes the application, the court is satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for believing that he is not guilty of such offence and that he is not likely to commit any offence while on bail.

(2) The limitations on granting of bail specified in clause (b) of sub-section (1) are in addition to the limitations under the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (2 of 1974) or any other law for the time being in force on granting of bail.

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Prosecutor, enabling them to take a stand on the bail application. The second stipulation is that the Court must be satisfied that reasonable grounds exist for believing that the accused is not guilty of such an offense and is not likely to commit any offense while on bail. If either of these conditions is not met, the ban on granting bail operates. The expression “reasonable grounds” means something more than prima facie grounds. It contemplates substantial probable causes for believing the accused is not guilty of the alleged offense. Even on fulfilling one of the conditions, the reasonable grounds for believing that the accused is not guilty of such an offense, the Court still cannot give a finding on the assurance that the accused is not likely to commit any such crime again.

15. The petitioner’s arguments did not point toward any material contradictions.

16. The submissions made above and the grounds in the bail petition do not shift the burden the legislature places on the accused under S. 37 of the NDPS Act. The petitioner has not stated anything in the bail petition to discharge the burden put by the stringent conditions placed in the statute by the legislature under section 37 of the NDPS Act. The investigation reveals sufficient prima facie evidence to connect the petitioner with the crime; thus, the petitioner fails to make out a case for bail. Any detailed discussions about the evidence may prejudice the case of the petitioner, the State, or the other accused.

17. In *Union of India (NCB) v. Khalil Uddin*, decided on 21 Oct 2022, 2022 SCC OnLine SC 2109, Hon’ble Supreme Court holds,

[4]. According to the prosecution, contraband material weighing about 13 kgs. of morphine was found in a motor vehicle which was driven by co-accused named Md. Jakir Hussain. During the course of investigation, it was found that the motor vehicle was recorded in the name of Md. Nizam Uddin who had executed a sale letter and handed over the custody of the vehicle to accused Md. Abdul Hai and that accused Md. Jakir Hussain was the driver employed by accused Md. Abdul Hai and that contraband material in question was to be handed over to accused-Khalil Uddin, an owner of a tea shop.

[5]. The High Court by its order which is presently under challenge, directed release of both the accused as stated above on bail after they had undergone custody to the tune of about a year. Questioning grant of relief to said accused, the instant appeals have been preferred.

[7]. What emerges from the record is that large quantity of contraband weighing about 13 kgs of morphine was found in a car which was driven by Md. Jakir Hussain. Whether the role played by said Md. Jakir Hussain could get connected with both the accused is a question.

[8]. The answer to said question could be the statement recorded of Md. Nizam Uddin. The statement of Md. Jakir Hussain recorded under Section 67 of the Act has also named his owner accused Abdul Hai. We are conscious of the fact that the validity and scope of such statements under Section 67 has been pronounced upon by this Court in *Tofan Singh v. State of Tamil Nadu* . In *State by (NCB) Bengaluru v. Pallulabid Ahmad Arimutta* , the rigour of law lay down by this

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Court in Tofan Singh was held to be applicable even at the stage of grant of bail.

[9]. However, going by the circumstances on record, at this stage, on the strength of the statement of Md. Nizam Uddin, though allegedly retracted later, the matter stands on a different footing. In our considered view, in the face of the mandate of Section 37 of the Act, the High Court could not and ought not to have released the accused on bail. We, therefore, allow these appeals, set aside the view taken by the High Court and direct that both the appellants be taken in custody forthwith.

[10]. We have been given to understand that the charge-sheet has been filed. In the circumstances, we direct the Trial Court to take up the matter and conclude the proceedings as early as possible and preferably within six months from the receipt of this order.

18. In Narayan Takri v. State of Odisha, decided on 10 Sep 2024, SLP (Crl.) 8198-2024, Hon'ble Supreme Court holds,

The petitioners are in custody since 28th May, 2022 for alleged commission of alleged offence under Section 20(b)(ii)(c) of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985. As per the FIR allegation, 125.3 kg. of "Ganja" was recovered from the petitioners.

[3]. It is not in dispute that the trial has commenced and that three prosecution witnesses have been examined till date.

[4]. Learned counsel for the petitioners submits that the third prosecution witness was examined as far back as on 28th January, 2024 and since then, no other prosecution witness has been examined. There is, however, no such averment in the petition.

[5]. Learned counsel appearing for the respondent submits that every endeavor shall be made on behalf of the prosecution to have all the witnesses examined by the end of this year.

[6]. The trial court is encouraged to expedite the trial and give its decision as early as possible, in accordance with law.

[7]. We, however, do not see any reason to interfere the impugned judgment and order at this stage; however, it is clarified that in the event the trial is not completed by the end of this year, the petitioners shall be at liberty to renew their prayer for bail before the trial court.

19. A perusal of the bail petition and the documents attached prima facie points towards the petitioner's involvement and does not make out a case for bail. The impact of crime would also not justify bail. Any further discussions will likely prejudice the petitioner; this court refrains from doing so.

20. The petitioner's custody of around 01 year cannot be termed prolonged, given the minimum sentence prescribed for the offense.

21. Regarding the delay in the trial, if the trial does not conclude within one year and six months of the petitioner's custody, and the delay is not attributable to the petitioner,

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the petitioner may apply for bail before the trial Court. The Court shall not be influenced by the dismissal of bail on merits or by criminal history and shall decide it on changed circumstances and the prolonged trial.

22. Further liberty is also reserved to file an application by referring to the Judicial precedent of Hon'ble Supreme Court in which the drug and weight are closer.

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

24. **Petition dismissed.** All pending applications, if any, stand disposed of.

(ANOOP CHITKARA)
JUDGE

27.08.2025
Jyoti Sharma

Whether speaking/reasoned: Yes
Whether reportable: No.