



223

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

CRM-M-472-2025 (O&M)

Date of Decision : 19-05-2025

Manu Mehta @ Sachin @ Hem Raj

.....Petitioner(s)

Versus

State of Punjab

.....Respondent(s)

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE ANOOP CHITKARA

Present: Mr. Rahul Rana, Advocate
swfor the petitioner.

Mr. Akshay Kumar, AAG, Punjab.

ANOOP CHITKARA, J. (Oral)

FIR No.	Dated	Police Station	Sections
7	15.1.2024	Sadar, District Ludhiana	457, 395, 120-B IPC and 25, 27, 54, 59 Arms Act and 22, 61, 85 NDPS 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 3 of the bail petition, the petitioner is in custody since 2.2.2024 and as per paragraph 15 of the bail petition, the petitioner has following criminal antecedents:

S.No.	FIR No.	Dated	Police Station	Sections
1.	484	23.9.2023	Vijay Vihar, District Rohini	392, 34, 397, 395, 412 IPC and 25, 27 Arms Act.
2.	24	10.01.2024	Seemapuri, District Shahdara	380, 454, 34 IPC

However, as per the reply filed by the State, the petitioner has following criminal antecedents:-

S.No.	FIR No.	Dated	Police Station	Sections
1.	122	2018	Begumpura, Delhi	392, 395, 397 IPC
2.	173	2018	Ranipur, Delhi	392, 395, 397 IPC

3. The facts and allegations are taken from the reply dated 3.3.2025 filed by the State, which read as under:-

“4. That the brief facts pertaining to the present case are that the present FIR/case has been registered on the statement of the complainant namely Jagdeesh Kumar with averments that he is running a jewellery shop in the name of Sadde Jewellers at Gill Road, Ludhiana. The complainant further stated that on dated 14.01.2024 at 06:30 PM, five unknown persons entered his shop. Three of them were armed with pistols. One out of them put the gun on the stomach of the complainant and other assailant put hand on the face of the complainant to prevent him from raising his voice. All the five persons took away 3 to 4 Kgs silver ornaments and gold ornaments weighing 25/30 grams. The brother of complainant namely Kanwaljit Singh, who is running a Aatta Chakki, near the jewellery shop came to save complainant. Then all the five persons ran away in their AURA car.

The complainant further stated that the CCTV cameras has been installed in his jewellery shop. The whole occurrence stands recorded in the said CCTV cameras and in case accused persons come before him, he can identify them.”

4. The Investigator claims to have complied with all the statutory requirements of the NDPS Act, 1985, and CrPC, 1973.

5. The petitioner's counsel seeks bail on the grounds of prolonged pretrial custody.

6. 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.

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

REASONING:

8. As regards the recovery of the alleged contraband, the relevant part of the reply reads as under:-

“during the course of investigation, the present petitioner was arrested with 2160 intoxicant tablets, the recovery of 320 grams silver jewellery. 20 tola 01 milligram gold nose rings one country made pistol 32 bore, 6 live cartridges 32 bore 1 Black pithubag and (1800 intoxicant tablets of "Alprazolm" 360 intoxicant tablets) total 2160 intoxicant tablets were stated to be recovered from the petitioner-accused”.

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 *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.

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, subject to the terms and conditions of this order. However, this order shall take effect from the time it is uploaded to 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.

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

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 the victim(s), their families, and 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 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, and the foundational condition is that if the petitioner 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, 24, or 27-A of the NDPS Act, then the State may apply for cancellation of this bail before the Trial Court, which shall be eligible, authorized, and shall have the discretion to 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. 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.

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

19-05-2025
AK

(ANOOP CHITKARA)
JUDGE

NOTE: Whether speaking/non-speaking: Speaking
Whether reportable: YES/NO