

CRM-M-30904-2025

IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA  
AT CHANDIGARH

CRM-M-30904-2025  
Reserved on: 01.10.2025  
Pronounced on: 16.10.2025

Kulwant Ram ...Petitioner

Versus

State of Punjab ...Respondent

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE ANOOP CHITKARA

Present: Mr. Sumit Dua, Advocate for the petitioner.

Mr. Jasdev Singh Thind, D.A.G., Punjab.

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ANOOP CHITKARA, J.

FIR No.	Dated	Police Station	Sections
125	18.06.2024	Police Commissionerate, District Jalandhar	21(c) of NDPS Act (Section 27A/25/29 of NDPS Act added later on)

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 10 of the bail application, the petitioner has the following criminal antecedents:

Sr. No.	FIR No.	Date	Offenses	Police Station
1.	15	02.02.2016	22-61-85 of NDPS Act	Sadar Hoshiarpur

3. The facts and allegations are taken from the status report filed by the State. On 18.06.2024, based on a chance recovery, the Police seized 01 kg of Heroin from the possession of co-accused. The Investigator claims to have complied with all the statutory requirements of the NDPS Act, 1985, and CrPC, 1973.

4. The petitioner's counsel argued that present petitioner has no role in the entire case and police falsely involved in the present FIR and at the time of alleged recovery of contraband of 280 gram of heroin from the car no. PB- 07-B11-2493, petitioner was not present in the car in fact at that time car was in possession of co-accused Balkar Singh. The co-accused Balkar Singh is the real brother in law of the petitioner's wife and he borrow the car from the petitioner's wife for two days i.e prior to the alleged recovery. The prosecution conceal this fact that when police recovered the alleged contraband from the above mentioned car, then car was parked in house of Balkar singh and Balkar singh admitted this fact in his confessional statement that money and contraband belongs to

him. But police malafide and making more sensational the case impleaded the present petitioner in the case as accused and next day after recovery of the contraband police arrest the petitioner from his house.

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 status report. He further submits that after petitioner's arrest, 280 grams of Heroin was also recovered from the possession of the petitioner.

7. As per paragraph 9 of the status report, the initial involvement is for 1 kg of heroin and later on, the police had also recovered 280 grams heroin from the petitioner's possession.

8. Dealing in 280 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	280 Gram
Punishable U/s	S.21(c) of NDPS Act, 1985
Quantity type	Commercial
Drug Quantity in % to upper limit of Intermediate	112.00%

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 &amp; Commercial in S.2(viia) &amp; 2(xxiii) NDPS Act, 1985</i>		
Notification No. & dated	S.O.1055(E)	10/19/2001
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

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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.(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>

9. Although, the evidence qua initial involvement is based on disclosure statement but the subsequent recovery of 280 grams of heroin from petitioner alone falls in the commercial category.

10. 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.

11. Section 37<sup>1</sup> 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.

12. 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.

13. It shall be relevant to refer to paragraphs 10 and 11 of the status report, which reads as follows:

*“10. EVIDENCE AGAINST THE PETITIONER:*

*That during the course of investigation, the involvement of the present petitioner, namely Kulwant Ram, surfaced on the basis of the disclosure statement of co-accused Satish Suman, who specifically stated that he had delivered heroin to the present petitioner on multiple occasions as per instructions received from one Lucky, a resident of Ganna Pind currently residing in the USA. The said deliveries were made using specific vehicles, including white i-20 cars bearing registration numbers PB-36-J-9289 and PB-07-BH-2493. Subsequent arrest of the present petitioner led to the recovery of 280 grams of heroin and an electronic weighing machine from his car No. PB-07-BH-2493. Further, co-accused Balkar Singh, during his interrogation, disclosed that he communicated with Lucky through a mobile number registered in the name of Sheela*

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<sup>1</sup> **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.

*Rani, wife of the present petitioner. The petitioner himself admitted during his disclosure that the aforementioned vehicle, registered in his wife's name, had been purchased from proceeds of drug trafficking and that his wife was also actively involved in the sale of narcotics. These disclosures, coupled with the recovery of contraband and the use of his vehicle and mobile connections registered in the family's name for the purpose of drug trafficking, clearly establish the petitioner's active and conscious involvement in the commission of the offence.*

*11. ROLE OF THE PETITIONER:*

*That the present petitioner, Kulwant Ram, has been actively and knowingly involved in the illegal trafficking of narcotic substances and is a part of a larger drug distribution network operating in coordination with co-accused persons. His role surfaced during the investigation pursuant to the disclosure statement of co-accused Satish Suman, who categorically stated that he delivered heroin to the petitioner under the directions of a foreign-based accused. Lucky. Upon the arrest of the petitioner, a recovery of 280 grams of heroin and an electronic weighing machine was effected from car No. PB-07-BH-2493, registered in the name of his wife, Sheela Rani. It was further revealed that the mobile number used for coordination with Lucky was registered in his wife's name, and the said vehicle was purchased using proceeds from the sale of narcotics. The petitioner himself, during his disclosure, admitted the involvement of his wife and the use of the vehicle and mobile phone in furtherance of the drug trade. The recovery of commercial quantity of contraband, coupled with material disclosures, establish the petitioner's conscious possession, active participation, and complicity in the commission of offences.”*

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 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 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 per custody certificate dated 30.09.2025 of around 01 year, 03 months and 06 days cannot be termed prolonged, given the minimum sentence prescribed for the offense. However, given the custody, Trial Court is requested to expedite the trial.

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

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

(ANOOP CHITKARA)  
JUDGE

16.10.2025  
Jyoti Sharma

Whether speaking/reasoned: Yes  
Whether reportable: No.