



2026:AHC:18900

HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT ALLAHABAD

CRIMINAL MISC. BAIL APPLICATION No. - 35402 of 2024

Sitaram Maurya

.....Applicant(s)

Versus

State of U.P.

.....Opposite
Party(s)

Counsel for Applicant(s)	:	Sharad Kumar Srivastava
Counsel for Opposite Party(s)	:	G.A.

Court No. - 66

HON'BLE KRISHAN PAHAL, J.

1. List has been revised.
2. Heard Sri Sharad Kumar Srivastava, learned counsel for the applicant, Sri Shyam Dhar Maurya, learned A.G.A. for the State and perused the material placed on record.
3. Applicant seeks bail in Case Crime No.190 of 1991, under Sections 147, 302/149 I.P.C., Police Station Sultanpur Ghosh, District Fatehpur, during the pendency of trial.
4. Learned counsel for the applicant has stated that the applicant is languishing in jail since 28.09.2016, as such, the period of incarceration comes out to be nine years and four months. The fundamental rights of the applicant enshrined under Article 21 of the Constitution of India stand violated. Only one witness has been examined to date and there is no likelihood of conclusion of trial in near future. There is no criminal history of the applicant. The applicant is ready to cooperate with trial. In case, he is released on bail, he will not misuse the liberty of bail.
5. Learned A.G.A. has vehemently opposed the bail application.
6. This Court had called for the status of trial from the concerned Trial Court. As per the said status report dated 28.11.2025, only one witness has been examined to date.
7. Granting the bail to the accused in ***Javed Gulam Nabi Shaikh Vs. State of***

Maharashtra and Another 2024 INSC 645, the Supreme Court has observed:

7. Having heard the learned counsel appearing for the parties and having gone through the materials on record, we are inclined to exercise our discretion in favour of the appellant herein keeping in mind the following aspects:

- (i) The appellant is in jail as an under-trial prisoner past four years;
- (ii) Till this date, the trial court has not been able to even proceed to frame charge; and
- (iii) As pointed out by the counsel appearing for the State as well as NIA, the prosecution intends to examine not less than eighty witnesses.

8. Having regard to the aforesaid, we wonder by what period of time, the trial will ultimately conclude. Howsoever serious a crime may be, an accused has a right to speedy trial as enshrined under the Constitution of India.

9. Over a period of time, the trial courts and the High Courts have forgotten a very well settled principle of law that bail is not to be withheld as a punishment.

10. In the aforesaid context, we may remind the trial courts and the High Courts of what came to be observed by this Court in ***Gudikanti Narasimhulu & Ors. v. Public Prosecutor, High Court*** reported in ***(1978) 1 SCC 240***. We quote:

"What is often forgotten, and therefore warrants reminder, is the object to keep a person in judicial custody pending trial or disposal of an appeal. Lord Russel, C.J., said [R v. Rose, (1898) 18 Cox]:

"I observe that in this case bail was refused for the prisoner. It cannot be too strongly impressed on the, magistracy of the country that bail is not to be withheld as a punishment, but that the requirements as to bail are merely to secure the attendance of the prisoner at trial."

8. The same principle was reiterated by the Supreme Court in *Gurbaksh*

Singh Sibba v. State of Punjab reported in (1980) 2 SCC 565; *Hussainara Khatoon v. Home Secy., State of Bihar* (1980) 1 SCC 81; *Kadra Pahadiya & Ors. v. State of Bihar* (1981) 3 SCC 671 and *Abdul Rehman Antulay v. R.S. Nayak* (1992) 1 SCC 225; *Mohd Muslim @ Hussain v. State (NCT of Delhi)* 2023 INSC 311; *A Convict Prisoner v. State* 1993 Cri LJ 3242; *Union of India v. K.A. Najeeb* (2021) 3 SCC 713; *Indrani Pratim Mukerjea v. CBI*, 2022 SCC OnLine SC 695.

9. In the money laundering case of **V. Senthil Balaji V. The Deputy Director, Directorate of Enforcement 2024 INSC 739**, the accused was incarcerated for more than 15 months as such the Supreme Court declared "*inordinate delay in the conclusion of the trial and the higher threshold for the grant of bail cannot go together*".

10. In **Satender Kumar Antil v. Central Bureau of Investigation** reported in (2022) 10 SCC 51, prolonged incarceration and inordinate delay engaged the attention of the court, which considered the correct approach towards bail, with respect to several enactments, including Section 37 NDPS Act.

11. The Supreme Court in its latest judgement passed in SLP (Crl.) Nos.10455-10456/2025 Ramnath Mishra @ Ramanath Mishra v. Central Bureau of Investigation reiterated that issues of personal liberty must be addressed with utmost speed by Courts. The accused had already been incarcerated for more than three and a half years, in the instant and connected matters. Releasing accused on bail due to excessive delays by the High Court in deciding his application also took into account lengthy pre-trial confinement, emphasizing speedy decision-making for matters of personal liberty.

12. Considering the facts and circumstances of the case, submissions made by learned counsel for the parties, the evidence on record, taking into consideration the period of incarceration of the applicant and the fact that only one witness has been examined to date, and without expressing any opinion on the merits of the case, *prima-facie* the Court is of the view that the applicant has made out a case for bail. The bail application is **allowed**.

13. Let the applicant- **Sitaram Maurya**, who is involved in aforementioned case crime be released on bail on his furnishing a personal bond and two

sureties each in the like amount to the satisfaction of the court concerned subject to following conditions. Further, before issuing the release order, the sureties be verified.

(i) The applicant shall not tamper with evidence during trial.

(ii) The applicant shall not pressurise/intimidate with the prosecution witnesses.

(iii) The applicant shall appear before the trial court on the date fixed.

14. In case of breach of any of the above conditions, it shall be a ground for cancellation of bail.

15. It is made clear that observations made in granting bail to the applicant shall not in any way affect the learned trial Judge in forming his independent opinion based on the testimony of the witnesses.

(Krishan Pahal,J.)

January 28, 2026
(Ravi Kant)