

IN THE HIGH COURT OF KERALA AT ERNAKULAM

PRESENT

THE HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE C.S.DIAS

TUESDAY, THE 28TH DAY OF APRIL, 2020 /8TH VAISAKHA, 1942

Bail Appl.No.139 of 2020

(Cr. No.38/2020 of Alathur Excise Range, Palakkad District)

Petitioner/Accused:

Sajithkumar, S/o Palliyan, aged 33 years, Thekkathara House,
Padur Desom, Kavassery -II Village, Alathur Via, Palakkad District.

By Advs. Sri. Jacob Sebastian

Sri. K.V.Winston

Sri. Anu Jacob

Respondents/State & Complainant:-

- 1.State of Kerala, rep. by Public Prosecutor, High Court of Kerala,
Ernakulam-682 031.
- 2.The Excise Inspector, Alathur Excise Range, Alathur Circle,
Palakkad-678 541.

BY PUBLIC PROSECUTOR SRI.**BINEESH E.C.**

THIS BAIL APPLICATION HAVING COME UP FOR ADMISSION ON
28.04.2020, THE COURT ON THE SAME DAY PASSED THE
FOLLOWING:

ORDER

This is an application filed under Section 439 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

2. The petitioner is the accused in Crime No.38/2020 of the Alathur Excise Range. The petitioner is alleged to have committed the offences punishable under Sections 55(g) of the Kerala Abakari Act.

3. The prosecution case, in brief, is that: the accused, was found in possession of 136 liters of wash. Thus, the accused has committed the above offences.

4. The petitioner was arrested on 10/04/2020.

5. Heard the learned counsel for the petitioner and the learned Public Prosecutor via video-conferencing.

6. The learned counsel for the petitioner argued that the petitioner is absolutely innocent of the accusations levelled against him. The petitioner has been falsely implicated in the above said crime. The investigation in this case is complete. The petitioner's continued detention may be unnecessary. Hence the petitioner may be enlarged bail.

7. The learned Public Prosecutor opposed the application. According to the learned Public Prosecutor, the petitioner was

found in possession of 136 liters of wash. The investigation is in progress.

8. The Hon'ble Supreme Court in ***Sanjay Chandra v. CBI*** [2012 (1) SCC 40] held as follows:

"27. This Court, time and again, has stated that bail is the rule and committal to jail an exception. It is also observed that refusal of bail is a restriction on the personal liberty of the individual guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution".

9. Recently, the Honourable Supreme Court in ***Nikesh Tarachand Shah v. Union of India*** [2018 (11) SCC 1] after going back to the days of the Magna Carta and after referring to Gurbaksh Singh Sibbia v. State of Punjab [(1980) 2 SCC 565] has reiterated the same view in ***Sanjay Chandra v. CBI (supra)***. Again, in ***P.Chidamabram v. Directorate of Enforcement*** [(2019) SCC Online SC 1549] the above proposition has been fortified.

10. After the outbreak of the Novel Corona Virus (COVID -19) pandemic in the country, the Hon'ble Supreme Court in In Re: Contagion of COVID-19 Virus In Prisons case (Suo Motu Writ Petition (C) No.1 of 2020) observed that the issue of overcrowding of prisons is a matter of serious concern. The State Governments

were directed to take adequate measures to de-congest the prisons. Following the above direction, the Home Department, Government of Kerala has promulgated order dated 25.03.2020, *inter alia*, directing the release of under-trial prisoners alleged to have committed offences punishable with punishment for seven years or less. Later, a Full Bench of this Court by order dated 25.03.2020 in W.P.(C) No.9400 of 2020 (Suo Motu), has issued directions to de-congest the prisons in the State, keeping in mind the proposition that bail is the rule and jail is the exception.

11. Having regard to the facts and circumstances, particularly the fact that that the petitioner has been in custody since, 10/04/2020, which is now 18 days; that the investigation of the case is practically complete; that the petitioner's continued detention is unnecessary and in view of the directions of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in the aforesaid decisions and also in view of the directions of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in a Full Bench of this Court to decongest prisons in view of Covid-19 pandemic, I am inclined to allow this bail application.

12. In the result this bail application is allowed, on the following conditions:-

- (i) Due to the present National lock-down and the closure of Courts, the Jail Superintendent, where the

petitioner are incarcerated, is directed to release the petitioner on them furnishing their permanent address and phone number and the addresses and phone numbers of their proposed sureties/immediate relatives. The petitioner shall also file an undertaking to the Jail Superintendent that they and their sureties will execute the bail bond before the jurisdictional Court within one week of its re-opening. The Jail Superintendent after ensuring the compliance of the above conditions, shall release the petitioner to the Station House Officer of the Police Station where the crime has been registered, who shall after noting down the above details, release the petitioner. The Investigating Officer shall keep a close vigil on the whereabouts of the petitioner.

(ii) The petitioner shall within one week from the re-opening of the jurisdictional Court, if not already re-opened, execute a bond for a sum of Rs.1,00,000/- (Rupees one lakh only) with two solvent sureties for the like sum each to the satisfaction of the jurisdictional Court.

(iii) The petitioner shall appear before the Investigating Officer on all Tuesdays and Saturdays between 10.A.M and 1 P.M. till final report is filed.

(iv) The petitioner shall not tamper with the evidence or influence the witnesses in the case, in any manner, whatsoever.

(v) The petitioner shall not commit any offence while on bail.

(vi) The petitioner shall not leave the State of Kerala without the permission of the jurisdictional court.

(vii) Needless to mention that, if the petitioner violates any of the above conditions, the Station House Officer shall be at liberty to approach the jurisdictional Court and file appropriate application seeking for cancellation of the bail.

**C.S.DIAS,
JUDGE**