IN THE HIGH COURT OF SINDH, BENCH AT SUKKUR

Cr. Bail Appln. No. D-140 of 2025

Before:
Mr. Justice Amjad Ali Bohio, J.
Mr. Justice Khalid Hussain Shahani, J.

Applicant	:	Abdul Ghafoor s/o Sono Khan, Suhag *Through* Mr. Humail Rafi Mahesar, Advocate
The State	:	*Through* Syed Sardar Ali Shah Rizvi, Addl. P.G
Date of hearing	:	17.12.2025
Date of short Order	:	17.12.2025
Reasons recorded on	:	19.12.2025

O R D E R

KHALID HUSSAIN SHAHANI, J.— Applicant Abdul Ghafoor, seeks post arrest bail in a case bearing crime No.363/2025, for offence under Section 9 (1), 3 (c) Sindh CNS Act, 2024, registered at Police Station B-Section, District Khairpur. Prior to this, his bail plea was declined by the Court of learned Additional Sessions Judge-I/(MCTC), Khairpur vide order dated 23.10.2025.

2. As per prosecution theory, on 18.09.2025 ASI Abdul Rauf Sangri, whilst patrol along with subordinates at about 1500 hours when reached at link road leading towards Grid Station near Pasco godown (*gudam*), found a person standing there, having a black colored shopper in his hand, he upon noticing the police party, attempted to escape but was apprehended tactfully. Upon search, the shopper contained pieces of *charas,* weighing 1650 grams was secured. Such memo of arrest and recovery was prepared. Consequent upon; case was registered *inter alia* on the above facts.

2. We have extensively heard the arguments of the learned advocate for applicant and learned Addl. P.G for the State and meticulously perused the record.

3. Regardless to the quantity involved in the above said case, it is imperative to note that police is continuously & bluntly violating the stipulated provisions of Act i.e. Sindh Control of Narcotics Substance Act, 2024 which specifically provides the mandatory requirements of doing a particular act, wherein the arresting officer during operation must have to shoot video or photographs of arrest, recovery or seizure. In the contemporary era, technological devices capable of recording video evidence are ubiquitously available and are carried by virtually every police and law enforcement officer. Modern smart phones are equipped with built-in cameras. Motor vehicles utilized by law enforcement agencies are frequently fitted with edge-cameras or dashboard-mounted recording devices. The collection of photographic and video graphic evidence of police operations is, therefore, not merely feasible but readily practicable. Notwithstanding, this practical availability and the statutory mandate, the investigation record before this Court is bereft of any video or photographic documentation of the arrest, seizure, or recovery proceedings in the instant case. This conspicuous absence of evidence, which could reasonably have been obtained and preserved, constitutes a material and inexplicable departure from the statutory requirement.

4. Moving ahead, the legislative intent embedded within the SCNS Act, 2024 (as amended in 2025), particularly sections 16, 17, 17(2), 35(1) and 35(2) holds proprietary. This is not a mere procedural formality but a substantive obligation designed to ensure, transparency in police conduct; accountability to law; evidentiary integrity and reliability; prevention of false implications and police abuse and advancement of the rule of law. A watershed amendment to the SCNS Act, introduced in 2025, has fundamentally altered the legal landscape governing bail in narcotics cases. Section 35(1), in its original form, provided an absolute interdiction

on bail, stipulating that: *"Notwithstanding anything contained in sections 496 and 497 of the Code, the bail shall not be granted to an accused person charged with an offence under this Act"*. However, Section 35(2) (as amended in 2025) now provides a critical exception, thereby restoring judicial discretion and constitutional safeguards. Section 35(2) provides that *"If it appears to the Special Court or competent court at any stage of the investigation, inquiry or trial, as the case may be, that the accused is arrested under this Act, but there are sufficient grounds for further inquiry into his being guilty, the accused shall, pending such inquiry, be released on bail with sureties..."*. The phrase *"sufficient grounds for further inquiry"* does not require the Court to reach a conclusion that guilt is improbable or that acquittal is likely. Rather, it directs the Court to examine whether the prosecution case, as presently constituted and investigated, exhibits deficiencies or lacunae that necessitate deeper investigation, cross-examination, and trial court scrutiny. Non-compliance with mandatory statutory provisions, such as the video recording requirement under Section 17(2), constitutes a material ground for "further inquiry" because such non-compliance, which undermines the reliability and credibility of the prosecution version; prevents verification of the police account through objective means; raises questions about whether the statutory safeguards were deliberately circumvented and creates a foundation for reasonable doubt regarding the veracity of the alleged recovery.

5. It is unfortunate to observe that, despite the clear mandate of statute and constitution, law enforcement agencies have, in numerous instances, been found to disregard mandatory procedural requirements. This represents not merely a technical departure but a mockery of law itself. It falls upon this Court, as the guardian of constitutional rights and the custodian of justice, to ensure that such transgressions do not go

unheeded and that the rule of law is vindicated in practice, not merely in theory.

6. The Honorable Supreme Court of Pakistan in the landmarks judgments of *Zahid Sarfaraz Gill v. The State* [2024 SCMR 934] and *Muhammad Abid Hussain v. The State* [2025 SCMR 721] have collectively establish that procedural fairness, technological evidence collection, and constitutional protections form the foundational pillars upon which narcotics prosecutions must rest, ensuring that neither the innocent are wrongfully convicted nor the guilty escape accountability through shoddy investigation.

7. On a combined analysis of facts, case law, and statutory framework, the Court concluded that the applicant had established a *prima facie* case for grant of bail. Consequently, the bail application is/was allowed subject to furnishing a solvent surety of Rs.100,000/- (Rupees One Hundred Thousand) along with a P.R bond of the same amount to the satisfaction of the trial court. The Court clarified that the observations in this order are tentative and shall not prejudice the trial proceedings or the eventual determination of guilt or innocence. These are the detailed reasons for short order dated 17.12.2025.

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