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BAIL & BONDS

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PROVISIONS OF BAIL AND BONDS

Explanatory Notes by DLA on bail provisions

What is bail?

- To grant bail is to 'set at liberty a person arrested or imprisoned, on security being taken for his appearance'. Thus, bail is basically a release from restraint, more particularly, release from the custody of the police.
- An order of bail gives back to the accused freedom on condition that he will appear to take his trial. Personal recognisance, suretyship bonds and such other modalities are the means by which an assurance is secured from the accused that though he has been released on bail, he will present himself at the trial of offence of which he is charged and for which he was arrested.

How should the court proceed?

- Whenever an application for bail is made to a court, the first question that it has to decide is whether the offence for which the accused is being prosecuted is bailable or otherwise.
- If the offence is bailable, bail will be granted under Section 436 without more ado; but if the offence is not bailable, further considerations will arise and the court will decide the question of grant of bail in the light of those further considerations.
- Here are some of the considerations the court should take into account: **nature and seriousness of the offence**, character of the evidence, circumstances which are peculiar to the accused, a reasonable possibility of the presence of the accused not being secured at the trial, reasonable apprehension of witnesses being tampered with the larger interests of the public or the State.



Object of bail

- The object of bail is to secure the appearance of the accused person at his trial by reasonable amount of bail. The object of bail is neither punitive nor preventative.
- Deprivation of liberty must be considered a punishment, unless it is required to ensure that an accused person will stand his trial when called upon.
- any imprisonment before conviction has a substantial punitive content.

Authority: [Sanjay Chandra v. CBI \[2012 SC\]](#)

Rationale for grant of bail

- Consequences of pre-trial detention are grave. Defendants presumed innocent are subjected to the psychological and physical deprivations of jail life, usually under more onerous conditions than are imposed on convicted defendants.
- The jailed defendant loses his job if he has one and is prevented from contributing to the preparation of his defence.
- Equally important, the burden of his detention frequently falls heavily on the innocent members of his family.

Grant of bail is the rule

Emperor v. H.L. Hutchinson [1931 All]

- The principle to be deduced from the various sections in CrPC was that grant of bail is the rule and refusal is the exception.
- An accused person who enjoys freedom is in a much better position to look after his case and to properly defend himself than if he were in custody.
- As a presumably innocent person he is therefore entitled to freedom and every opportunity to look after his own case.
- A presumably innocent person must have his freedom to enable him to establish his innocence.



Satender Kumar Antil v. Central Bureau of Investigation [2022 SC]

- The principle that bail is the rule and jail is the exception has been well recognised through repetitive pronouncements of this Court.
- This again is on the touchstone of Article 21 of the Constitution.

Question

- **Is surety a necessary requirement of bail?**

Ans.

- Bearing in mind the need for liberal interpretation in areas of social justice, individual freedom and indigents' rights, we hold that bail covers both— release on one's own bond, with or without sureties. When sureties should be demanded and what sum should be insisted on are dependent on variables. [Source: Supreme Court in Moti Ram v. State of MP 1978]
- Poor men - Indians are, in monetary terms, indigents - young persons, infirm individuals and women are weak categories and courts should be liberal in releasing them on their own recognisances - put whatever reasonable conditions you may.

Question

- **Should the surety be from the same district in which the court is situated?**

Ans.

- The magistrate has demanded sureties from his own district! What is a Malayalee, Kannadiga, Tamil or Telugu to do if arrested for alleged misappropriation or theft or criminal trespass in Bastar, Port Blair, Pahalgam or Chandni Chowk?

He cannot have sureties owning properties in these distant places. He may not know any one there and might have come in a batch or to seek a job or in a



morcha. Judicial disruption of Indian unity is surest achieved by such provincial allergies.

- What law prescribes surety is from outside or non-regional language applications? What law prescribes the geographical discrimination implicit in asking for sureties from the court district?

Source: **Supreme Court in Moti Ram v. State of MP 1978**

What is a Surety Bond?

- By a surety bond a third party agrees to be responsible for debt or obligation of the defendant.

PRESUMPTION OF INNOCENCE

- Innocence of a person accused of an offense is presumed through a legal fiction, placing the onus on the prosecution to prove the guilt before the Court.
- Thus, it is for that agency to satisfy the Court that the arrest made was warranted and enlargement on bail is to be denied.
- Presumption of innocence, being a facet of Article 21, shall inure to the benefit of the accused.

Authority: **Satender Kumar Antil v. Central Bureau of Investigation** [2022 SC]



STATUTORY PROVISIONS:

BAIL IN BAILABLE OFFENCES

Section 436

- When a person not accused of a non-bailable offence
 - is arrested or detained without warrant
 - by an officer in charge of a police station or
 - appears or is brought before a Court
- *and is prepared to give bail*
 - at any time while in custody of such officer or
 - at any stage of proceeding before such Court
- such person **shall be released on bail**

- If such person is indigent and unable to furnish surety
 - such officer or Court **shall** discharge him
 - on his executing a bond without sureties

Indigent person

- Where a person is unable to give bail
 - within a week of his arrest
- it shall be sufficient ground
 - to presume that he is an indigent person

[Note: **Inserted w.e.f 23.6.2006**]



BAIL IN NON-BAILABLE CASES

Section 437

General rule for non-bailable offences:

- When a person accused of, or suspected of, a **non-bailable offence**
 - is arrested or detained without warrant
 - by an officer-in-charge of a police station
 - or appears or is brought before a Court
 - other than High Court or Court of session
- he **may be released on bail**

Two exceptions to the general rule:

First Exception

- such person shall not be so released
 - if there are reasonable grounds for believing that
 - he has been guilty of an offence punishable with death or imprisonment for life

Second Exception

- such person shall not be so released
 - if such offence is a cognizable offence and
 - he had been previously convicted of an offence punishable with death or imprisonment for seven years or more or
 - he had been previously convicted on two or more occasions
 - of a cognizable offence punishable with imprisonment for 3 years or more
 - but not less than 7 years

Exception to the two exceptions:

First Proviso to section 437(1)

- Court may direct that
 - a person in clauses (i) and (ii) be released on bail
 - if such person is **under sixteen years, a woman, sick or infirm**



Further exception to the second exception:

Second Proviso to section 437(1)

- Court may also direct that
 - a person under clause (ii) be released on bail
 - if it is just and proper so to do **for any other special reason**

Imposition of conditions:

Section 437(3)

- When a person accused or suspected of
 - an offence punishable with imprisonment of seven years or more or
 - an offence under Chapters VI, XVI or XVII of IPC
- is released on bail
- Court **shall** impose these conditions:
 - (a) such person shall attend in accordance with conditions of bond
 - (b) such person shall not commit an offence similar to the offence of which he is accused or suspected
 - (c) such person shall not make any inducement, threat or promise to a witness to dissuade him from disclosing such fact to court or to any police officer or tamper with evidence
 - (d) Court **may** also impose other necessary conditions in interest of justice

Cancellation of bail by Court

Section 437(5)

- Any Court which has released a person on bail
 - may direct if necessary that such person be arrested
 - and commit him to custody



Explanatory Notes by DLA on section 437

- Section 437 Cr.P.C. provides as to when bail may be taken in case of **non-bailable** offences.
- Section 437 deals with two stages during the initial period of investigation of a non-bailable offence. *Even the officer in-charge of the police station may, by recording his reasons in writing, release a person accused of or suspected of commission of any non-bailable offence provided there are no reasonable grounds for believing that the accused has committed a non-bailable offence punishable with death or imprisonment for life.*

Two categories of offences under section 437(1)

- Sub-section (1) of Section 437, makes a **dichotomy** in dealing with non-bailable offences. *The first category relates to offences punishable with death or imprisonment for life and the rest are all other non-bailable offences.*

The First Category

- With regard to the first category, Section 437(1), imposes a **bar** to grant of bail by the Court [of Magistrate] or the officer in-charge of a police station to a person accused of or suspected of the commission of an offence punishable with death or imprisonment for life, *if there appear reasonable grounds for believing that he has been so guilty.*
- Naturally, therefore, at the stage of investigation unless there are some materials to justify an officer or the Court to believe that there are no reasonable grounds for believing that the person accused of or suspected of the commission of such an offence has been guilty of the same, there is a **ban** imposed under Section 437(1) against granting of bail.
- Whenever a person is arrested by the police for such an offence, there should be materials produced before the Court to come to a conclusion as to the nature of the case he is involved in or he is suspected of. If at that stage from the materials available there appear reasonable grounds for believing that the



person has been guilty of an offence punishable with death or imprisonment for life, the Court [of Magistrate] has no other option than to commit him to custody.

- *At that stage, the Court is concerned with the **existence** of the materials against the accused and not as to whether those materials are credible or not on the merits.*
- It is clear that when an accused is brought before the Court of a Magistrate with the allegation against him of an offence punishable with death or imprisonment for life, he has ordinarily no option in the matter but to refuse bail subject, however, to the first proviso to Section 437(1) and in a case where the Magistrate entertains a reasonable belief on the materials that the accused has not been guilty of such an offence.
- *This will, however, be an extraordinary occasion since there will be **some materials** at the stage of initial arrest for the accusation or for strong suspicion of commission by the person of such an offence.*
- It is difficult to conceive how if a police officer arrests a person on a reasonable suspicion of commission of an offence punishable with death or imprisonment for life (Section 41) and forwards him to a Magistrate [Section 167(1)] the Magistrate at that stage will have reasons to hold that there are no reasonable grounds for believing that he has not been guilty of such an offence. At that stage unless the Magistrate is able to act under the proviso to Section 437(1) bail appears to be out of question.

The Second Category

- In all other non-bailable cases judicial discretion will always be exercised by the Court in favour of granting bail subject to sub-section (3) of Section 437 with regard to imposition of conditions, if necessary.
- *Unless **exceptional** circumstances are brought to the notice of the Court which may defeat proper investigation and a fair trial, the Court will not*



decline to grant bail to a person who is not accused of an offence punishable with death or imprisonment for life.

- Under sub-section (4) an officer or a Court releasing any person on bail under sub-section (1) or sub-section (2) is required to record in writing his or its reasons for so doing. That is to say, law requires that in non-bailable offences punishable with death or imprisonment for life, reasons have to be recorded for releasing a person on bail, clearly disclosing how discretion has been exercised in that behalf.

Latest judgment of the Supreme Court on the First category of cases or on the First Exception to the General Rule of section 437(1)

Satender Kumar Antil v. Central Bureau of Investigation [July 2022 SC]

- Section 437 empowers the Magistrate to deal with all the offenses while considering an application for bail with the exception of an offense punishable either with life imprisonment or death triable exclusively by the Court of Sessions.
- The object is to exclude the offense exclusively triable by the Court of Sessions.
- We would like to reiterate ... that the jurisdictional Magistrate who otherwise has the jurisdiction to try a criminal case which provides for a maximum punishment of either life or death sentence, has got ample jurisdiction to consider the release on bail.

DLA Note on Satendra Kumar Antil

- Merely because an offence is punishable when imprisonment for life, it does not follow a Magistrate would have no jurisdiction to grant bail, unless offence is also exclusively triable by the Court of Sessions.
- This implies that *the Magistrate would be entitled to grant bail in cases triable by him even though punishment prescribed may extend to imprisonment for life.*



Role of Courts

- Courts over-see the action of the police and exercise judicial discretion in granting bail, *always bearing in mind that the liberty of an individual is not unnecessarily and unduly abridged and at the same time the cause of justice does not suffer.*
- After the Court releases a person on bail under sub-section (1) or sub-section (2) of Section 437 it may direct him to be arrested again when it considers necessary so to do. This will be also in exercise of its judicial discretion on valid grounds.

The principle underlying Section 437

- *The principle underlying Section 437 is therefore, towards granting of bail except in cases where there appear to be reasonable grounds for believing that the accused has been guilty of an offence punishable with death or imprisonment for life and also when there are other valid reasons to justify the refusal of bail.*

Applicability

- Section 437 is concerned only with the Court of Magistrate. It expressly excludes the High Court and the Court of Session.



ANTICIPATORY BAIL

Bail to persons apprehending arrest

Section 438(1)

- Where any person has **reason** to believe
 - that he may be arrested on accusation of a non-bailable offence
- he may *apply* to High Court or Court of Session
 - for a direction that *in the event of such arrest* he shall be **released on bail**

- After taking into consideration
 - nature and gravity of accusation
 - antecedents of applicant, including whether he has previously undergone imprisonment on conviction for a cognizable offence
 - possibility of applicant to flee from justice
 - whether accusation has been made with object of injuring or humiliating applicant by having him arrested
- High Court or Court of Session may
 - either reject the application forthwith
 - or issue interim order for grant of **anticipatory bail**

Section 438(1A)

- Where Court grants an interim order:
- it shall cause a notice of not less than seven days
 - to be served on the Public Prosecutor and Superintendent of Police

Section 438(1B) [Inserted by CrPC Amendment Act 2005]

- Presence of applicant seeking anticipatory bail
 - shall be obligatory at the time of final hearing and passing of final order
- if on application made by Public Prosecutor
 - Court considers such presence necessary in interest of justice



Effect of arrest after a favourable order u/s 438:

Section 438(3)

- If such person is thereafter arrested
 - by a police officer without warrant on such accusation
 - and is prepared at the time of arrest or while in custody to give bail
- he shall be released on bail
- If a Magistrate taking cognizance of such offence decides
 - that a warrant should be issued against that person
 - he shall issue a *bailable* warrant in conformity with direction of Court

No Anticipatory Bail for certain IPC offences

Section 438(4)

[**Inserted by the Criminal Law Amendment Act 2018**]

- This section shall not apply
 - to any case involving the arrest of any person
 - on accusation of having committed an offence u/s 376(3) or 376AB or 376DA or 376DB of IPC

Explanatory Notes by DLA on section 438(4)

- As a result of this new provision inserted by the **Criminal Law Amendment Act 2018**, protection of anticipatory bail would henceforth not be available to persons accused of having committed **rape and gang rape** of women **under sixteen years of age** and **under twelve years of age**.

Whether Anticipatory Bail is available for offences under the SC/ST Act?

Section 18 of SCs and STs(Prevention of Atrocities) Act 1989:

- Nothing in section 438 of Criminal Procedure Code shall apply
 - to a case involving arrest of any person
 - on an accusation of having committed an offence under this Act



SUPREME COURT DIRECTIONS

Cases where the bar against anticipatory bail under the SC/ST Act is not applicable

- If a person is able to show that, prima facie, he has not committed any atrocity against a member of SC and ST and that **the allegation was mala fide and prima facie false** and that prima facie no case was made out, there is no justification for applying Section 18 in such cases.
- Exclusion of Section 438 applies when a prima facie case of commission of offence under the Atrocities Act is made. On the other hand, if it can be shown that **the allegations are prima facie motivated and false**, such exclusion will not apply.

Source:

- **Dr. Subhash Kashinath Mahajan v. State of Maharashtra**
- [March 2018]

SUBSEQUENT AMENDMENT BY PARLIAMENT

Parliament has since amended the SC & ST [Prevention of Atrocities] Act in **August 2018** to nullify the abovesaid judgment of the Supreme Court.

The following provision has been inserted in that Act:

- "The provisions of section 438 of the Code shall not apply to a case under this Act, notwithstanding any judgment or order or direction of any Court."

The current legal position

- ***The current legal position therefore is that anticipatory bail is not available in case of accusations under the SC & ST [Prevention of Atrocities] Act.***

Other Explanatory Notes by DLA on section 438

- Section 438 affords what is generally referred to as '**anticipatory bail**', an expression which was used by the Law Commission in the 41st Report. Any order of bail can, of course, be effective only from the time of arrest.



What is an anticipatory bail?

- The distinction between an ordinary order of bail and an order of anticipatory bail is that whereas the former is granted after arrest and therefore means release from the custody of the police, the latter **is granted in anticipation of arrest** and is therefore **effective at the very moment of arrest**.
- Police custody is an inevitable concomitant of arrest for non-bailable offences. An order of anticipatory bail constitutes, so to say, an insurance against police custody following upon arrest for offence in respect of which the order is issued.
- In other words, unlike a post-arrest order of bail, *it is a pre-arrest legal process which directs that if the person in whose favour it is issued is thereafter arrested on the accusation in respect of which the direction is issued, he shall be released on bail.*

When is an anticipatory bail sought?

- Anticipatory bail is sought when there is a mere apprehension of arrest on the accusation that the applicant has committed a non-bailable offence. A person who has yet to lose his freedom by being arrested asks for freedom in the event of arrest.
- That is the stage at which it is imperative to protect his freedom, insofar as one may, and to give full play to the presumption that he is innocent.

Are there limitations similar to section 437?

- Section 438 confers on the High Court and the Court of Session the power to grant anticipatory bail. There is no warrant for reading into this provision the conditions subject to which bail can be granted under Section 437(1).
- Section 437(1), while conferring the power to grant bail in cases of non-bailable offences, provides by way of an **exception** that a person accused or suspected of the commission of a non-bailable offence "shall not be so



released" if there appear to be reasonable grounds for believing that he has been guilty of an offence punishable with death or imprisonment for life. If it was intended that the exception contained in Section 437(1) should govern the grant of relief under Section 438(1), nothing would have been easier for the legislature than to introduce into the latter section a similar provision.

Reasons

- In cases falling u/s 437, there is some concrete data on the basis of which it is possible to show that there are reasonable grounds for believing that the applicant has been guilty of an offence punishable with death or imprisonment for life. In cases falling u/s 438 that stage is still to arrive and, in the generality of cases, it would be premature and indeed difficult to predicate that there are or are not reasonable grounds for so believing.

Can conditions be imposed?

- While granting relief u/s 438(1), appropriate conditions can be imposed u/s 438(2) so as to ensure an uninterrupted investigation. One of such conditions can even be that in the event of the police making out a case of a likely discovery u/s 27 of Evidence Act, the person released on bail shall be liable to be taken in police custody for facilitating the discovery.

But no unnecessary restrictions

- Since denial of bail amounts to deprivation of personal liberty, the court should lean against imposition of unnecessary restrictions on the scope of Section 438, especially when no such restrictions have been imposed by the legislature in the terms of that section.
- Section 438 is a procedural provision which is concerned with personal liberty of the individual, who is entitled to the benefit of the presumption of innocence since he is not, on the date of his application for anticipatory bail, convicted of the offence in respect of which he seeks bail.



- An over-generous infusion of constraints and conditions which are not to be found in Section 438 can make its provisions constitutionally vulnerable since the right to personal freedom cannot be made to depend on compliance with unreasonable restrictions.

Grant of anticipatory bail

- If the proposed accusation appears to stem not from motives of furthering the ends of justice but from some ulterior motive, the object being to injure and humiliate the applicant by having him arrested, a direction for the release of the applicant on bail in the event of his arrest would generally be made.
- The nature and seriousness of the proposed charges, the context of the events likely to lead to the making of the charges, a reasonable possibility of the applicant's presence not being secured at the trial, a reasonable apprehension that witnesses will be tampered with and "the larger interests of the public or the State" are some of the considerations which the court has to keep in mind while deciding an application for anticipatory bail.

Reason to believe

- Section 438(1) lays down a condition, which has to be satisfied before anticipatory bail can be granted. The applicant must show that he has "reason to believe" that he may be arrested for a non-bailable offence. The use of the expression "reason to believe" shows that the belief that the applicant may be so arrested must be founded on reasonable grounds.
- Mere 'fear' is not 'belief', for which reason it is not enough for the applicant to show that he has some sort of a vague apprehension that someone is going to make an accusation against him, in pursuance of which he may be arrested.
- Grounds on which belief of applicant is based that he may be arrested for a non-bailable offence, must be capable of being examined by the court objectively, as it is then alone that court can determine whether applicant has reason to believe that he may be so arrested.



Is filing of an FIR necessary?

- Filing of a first information report is not a condition precedent to the exercise of the power under Section 438. The imminence of a likely arrest founded on a reasonable belief can be shown to exist even if an FIR is not yet filed.
- Also, anticipatory bail can be granted even after an FIR is filed, so long as the applicant has not been arrested.

No blanket order

- A 'blanket order' of anticipatory bail should not generally be passed. This flows from the very language of the section which requires the applicant to show that he has "reason to believe" that he may be arrested. A belief can be said to be founded on reasonable grounds only if there is something tangible to go by on the basis of which it can be said that the applicant's apprehension that he may be arrested is genuine.

What should the bail application contain?

- Specific events and facts must be disclosed by the applicant in order to enable the court to judge the reasonableness of his belief, the existence of which is the sine qua non of exercise of power conferred by this section.

Paramount consideration

- It is of paramount consideration to remember that freedom of individual is as necessary for the survival of society as it is for the egoistic purpose of the individual.
- *A person seeking anticipatory bail is still a free man entitled to presumption of innocence.* He is willing to submit to restraints on his freedom, by acceptance of condition which the court may think fit to impose, in consideration of the assurance that if arrested he shall be enlarged on bail.



Guiding principles in dealing with applications u/s 438 issued by the Constitution Bench in **Sushila Aggarwal v. State (NCT of Delhi) [2020 SC]**

- The application seeking anticipatory bail should be based on concrete facts (and not vague or general allegations) relatable to one or other specific offence. It should contain bare essential facts relating to the offence, and why the applicant reasonably apprehends arrest, as well as his side of the story.
- It is not essential that an application should be moved only after an FIR is filed; it can be moved earlier, so long as the facts are clear and there is reasonable basis for apprehending arrest.
- While considering such application the court has to consider the nature of the offence, the role of the person, the likelihood of his influencing the course of investigation or tampering with evidence (including intimidating witnesses), likelihood of fleeing justice (such as leaving the country), etc.
- The courts would be justified – and ought to impose conditions spelt out in Section 437 (3) Cr.P.C.
- Anticipatory bail granted can, depending on the conduct and behaviour of the accused, continue after filing of the charge-sheet till the end of trial.
- An order of anticipatory bail should not be “blanket”....It should be confined to the offence or incident, for which apprehension of arrest is sought, in relation to a specific incident.
- If and when the occasion arises, it may be possible for the prosecution to claim the benefit of Section 27 of the Evidence Act in regard to a discovery of facts made in pursuance of information supplied by a person released on bail.
- It is open to the police to move the court which grants anticipatory bail, for a direction u/s 439 (2) to arrest the accused, in the event of violation of any term.
