

CrPC S. 438 - Bail - Length of the period spent by him in custody and the unlikelihood of the trial being completed anytime soon - We are conscious of the fact that the charges levelled against the respondent are grave and a serious threat to societal harmony - Had it been a case at the threshold, we would have outrightly turned down the respondent's prayer for bail - However, keeping in mind the length of the period spent by him in custody and the unlikelihood of the trial being completed anytime soon, the High Court appears to have been left with no other option except to grant bail - An attempt has been made to strike a balance between the appellant's right to lead evidence of its choice and establish the charges beyond any doubt and simultaneously the respondent's rights guaranteed under Part III of our Constitution have been well protected.

Held, It is thus clear to us that the presence of statutory restrictions like Section 43D (5) of UAPA perse does not oust the ability of Constitutional Courts to grant bail on grounds of violation of Part III of the Constitution. Indeed, both the restrictions under a Statute as well as the powers exercisable under Constitutional Jurisdiction can be well harmonised. Whereas at commencement of proceedings, Courts are expected to appreciate the legislative policy against grant of bail but the rigours of such provisions will melt down where there is no likelihood of trial being completed within a reasonable time and the period of incarceration already undergone has exceeded a substantial part of the prescribed sentence. Such an approach would safeguard against the possibility of provisions like Section 43D (5) of UAPA being used as the sole metric for denial of bail or for wholesale breach of constitutional right to speedy trial.

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