**IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA AT CHANDIGARH**

**CRM-M-943-2022**
**Date of decision: 16.03.2022**

Neil Terrance Haslam

...Petitioner

Versus

State of Haryana

.....Respondent

**CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE HARNARESH SINGH GILL**

Present:- Mr. Vinod Ghai, Sr. Advocate with
Mr. J.P.Sharma, Mr. Edward Augustine George and
Ms. Mahima Dogra, Advocates,
for the petitioner.

Mr. Surender Singh, AAG, Haryana.

Mr. R.S.Rai, Sr. Advocate with
Ms. Rubina Vermani, Advocate,
for the complainant.

**HARNARESH SINGH GILL, J.**

Through this petition, the petitioner seeks anticipatory bail in case bearing FIR No.216 dated 04.06.2019, registered at Police Station Udyog Vihar, Gurugram, under Sections 384, 464, 465 and 506 IPC , and Sections 383, 385, 388, 468, 469, 467, 389, 420, 471, 476, 511 and 120-B IPC and Section 66-D of Information Technology Act, 2000 (added later on).

Status report dated 03.02.2022, by way of affidavit of the Assistant Commissioner of Police, Udyog, Gurugam, was filed and the same was taken on record.

Learned Senior Counsel for the petitioner has contended that allegations against the petitioner were false and frivolous; that the present

FIR was registered on the complaint dated 04.06.2019 moved by Ashok Sehrawat, an officer of the India Bulls, against Vikash Shekhar and Rammani Pandey, for their acts of forgery, extortion, criminal intimidation and threats; that Vikas Shekhar was arrested on 08.06.2019, and that Rammani Pandey was arrested on 27.06.2019; that the first fictitious call was made in the last week of April, 2019, in the office of the complainant and the second call on 27.05.2019; that the petitioner was neither named in the FIR nor any specific role was attributed to him; moreover, the petitioner was not named during several disclosure statements, and that co-accused Aniruddha Bahal stands enlarged on pre-arrested bail by a Coordinate Bench, vide order dated 29.11.2021.

Learned Senior Counsel has further contended that the petitioner, who is an Investigative Journalist, has unearthed several scams; that the petitioner is an acknowledged black money informer to the Department of Income-tax and the Central Board of Direct Taxes, and that he has reported several banking scams, as well.

Learned Senior Counsel has further contended that the petitioner has been implicated in the present case for the reason that he was one of the informers, who reported DHFL scam and a look-out circular by the Enforcement Directorate, had been issued against Sameer Gehlaut, Chairman-cum-Managing Director of the Indiabulls, who had left the country; that challan against Vikas Shekhar and Rammani Pandey, co-accused, has already been presented and the charges framed; that there is no evidence against the petitioner to the effect that money was ever passed on to him; that the only allegation against the petitioner is that he had issued threats and intimidation, and that the petitioner has been involved in the present case on the statement of Rammani Pandey, suffered during custody on 28.06.2019.

Learned Senior Counsel has further submitted that on the transfer petition filed by co-accused, Vikash Shekhar, the Hon'ble Apex Court has transferred the case from the Court of the Chief Judicial Magistrate, Gurugram, to Patiala House Courts, New Delhi.

On the other hand, learned State counsel and the learned Senior Counsel for the complainant, have submitted that co-accused Rammani Pandey was arrested on 27.06.2019 and Rs.41,74,000/- alongwith some valuable jewellery was recovered. In his disclosure statement, he admitted his guilt and further disclosed that he and his son, namely, Kisley Pandey, co-accused, are running a law firm i.e. Managium Juris LLP Company Limited and he was in constant touch with Neil Terrance (present petitioner), who is a Data Manager of Cobra Post; that he was in contact with some officers of the Income-Tax Department and after collecting data from the office of the Income-Tax Department, he had made deals with the finance companies; that one such deal was made by the petitioner and Rammani Pandey with DHFL and Rs.15 crore came to the share of the petitioner and Rs.35 crore came to that of co-accused Rammani Pandey and Kisley Pandey.

It is further submitted that name of the petitioner had figured in the statement of Poorva Popli and Swati Arora, recorded under Section 161 Cr.P.C., on 04.09.2019, who are employees of the law firm i.e. Managium Juris; that the petitioner is the Data Manager of 'Cobra Post', and has provided data of DHFL and Indiabulls to the Government Departments, in order to blackmail them. In such circumstances, custodial interrogation of the petitioner is required. It was further submitted that a petition i.e. CRM-M-37902-2019, filed by co-accused Rammani Pandey, seeking regular bail, stands dismissed by a Coordinate Bench, vide order dated 27.11.2019, and that Kisley Pandey, son of Rammani Pandey, is absconding.

I have heard the learned Senior Counsel for the petitioner, learned State counsel, learned Senior Counsel for the complainant, and have perused the record.

After hearing the rival contentions, this Court finds that the petitioner is not entitled to the discretionary relief of anticipatory bail and his custodial interrogation is required for the proper investigation. Co-accused Rammani Pandey suffered a disclosure statement that he was in touch with the petitioner, who was the Data Manager of Cobra Post.

It is the admitted case of the petitioner that he is an Investigative Journalist of repute, and is an acknowledged black money informer to the Department of Income Tax and the Central Board of Direct Taxes, and has been in constant touch with the tax related institutions as black money informer. Though the petitioner has not been named in the FIR, yet Poorva Popli and Swati Arora, who are the employees of Managium Juris, statedly owned by co-accused Rammani Pandey and his son Kisley Pandey (now absconding) have specifically named the petitioner as one of the accomplices. The said persons being the employees of the aforesaid law firm, have not been shown to have had any axe to grind by naming the petitioner falsely. Rather, it suggests the converse i.e. they seem to have named the petitioner having closely watched with meeting Rammani Pandey and Kisley Pandey. Rammani Pandey has also disclosed that the petitioner used to get data of the financial companies in order to blackmail them in a planned manner. Even as per co-accused Rammani Pandey, an amount of Rs.50 crore was received from DHFL Company in the presence of the petitioner, co-accused Vikas Chander and Kisley Pandey, out of which, an amount of Rs.15 crore was given to the petitioner, being his share. Moreover, as noticed above, the petition filed by co-accused, Rammani Pandey, stands dismissed by a Coordinate Bench, vide order dated 27.11.2019 and his son, namely, Kisley Pandey is absconding, and also a petition filed by co-accused Kisley Pandey, seeking quashing of the present FIR, was dismissed on 27.02.2020.

In view of the above, I find no ground to grant the concession of anticipatory bail to the petitioner and accordingly, the present petition stands dismissed.

Nothing observed herein above shall have any bearing on the merits of the case as the same is only for the purpose of deciding the present petition.

**16.03.2022** **(HARNARESH SINGH GILL)**
parveen kumar **JUDGE**

Whether reasoned/speaking? Yes/No
Whether reportable? Yes/No