

CRM-M-45465-2023

IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA AT CHANDIGARH

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Date of decision: 19.09.2023

Laxmi Devi @ Kirti

....Petitioner

V/s

State of Haryana

....Respondent

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE ARUN MONGA

Present: Mr. SurenderSaini, Advocate for the petitioner.

Mr. VikasBhardwaj, AAG Haryana.

ARUN MONGA, J. (Oral)

After being declined bail by the trial Court, petitioner before this Court seeks her release as an undertrial in a case bearing FIR No.02 dated 01.08.2022, registered under Sections 420, 467, 468, 471, 120-B of the Indian Penal Code, 1860 (for short 'IPC') and Sections 66-C, 66-D of the Information Technology Act, 2000 (for short 'IT Act'), at Police Station, Cyber Crime, Sector-23, Sonipat, District Sonipat.

2. Per prosecution version, complainant, a Senior General Manager, of ECE Industries, Delhi Road, Sonipat, Haryana, stated that ECE is manufacturing Power Transformers and having current account No.01060500000002 in Bank of Baroda, Gurudwara Road, Sonipat. For Internet banking or SMS Alert, aforementioned bank account is connected to Phone No.7082210528 belonging to Senior Accountant, Jai Kishan Bhatt. He used to deal with Internet banking in this account. Complainant received call from Jai Kishan stating that debit messages of Rs.10 lakh–10 lakh were received on his phone. Whereas, no such transaction were made by company and when they tried block the account, Jai Kishan discovered that account was not accessible. Internet Login failed. He then called on bank helpline to block the account and it was then that the account was blocked

by bank. Thereafter, he was told by Jai Kishan that in a series of 16 transactions, a total Rs.1 Crore 89 lakh was withdrawn by the fraudsters by way of on line transfer. On the basis of this complaint, FIR in question was registered. During investigation, big Cyber scam/scandal involving many persons, in distributing the transferred amount of complainant company was found and petitioner was arrested as a suspect on 11.12.2022.

3. At the outset, learned counsel for petitioner contends that co-accused of petitioner, namely Narender Kumar @ Kala,RajuYadav, Ashok Kumar Yadav and Hemant Kumar Meena have all been granted concession of bail by this Court.

3.1. While the other co-accused, namely Ashutosh @ Rajan, Rajpal @ Raju, Shailesh Kumar and BhimYadav have been granted bail by learned Court below.

3.2. Role attributed to the petitioner is on similar footing, yet she continues to languish in jail while others have been granted bail.

3.3. Learned counsel for petitioner submits that petitioner was arrayed on the basis of disclosure statements of co-accused Ashok Kumar and Rajpal @ Raju, who have already been accorded the concession of bail by a coordinate Bench of this Court and the Court below. Petitioner is nowhere connected with the alleged offence as she has not done any overt or covert act. Petitioner was not named in the FIR. She is not even a conspirator.

3.4. Learned counsel further urges that nothing is to be recovered from the petitioner and, thus, no useful purpose would be served by keeping her behind bars. Investigation is over. Petitioner is not involved in any other case.

4. On the other hand, learned State counsel opposes the petition and submits that petitioner has committed serious offence. Complainant-company has been put to huge loss of Rs.1,89,00,00/- by hacking its account fraudulently. He submits that it is a big nexus spread all over the country. If enlarged on bail, there

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is everylikelihood that petitioner will commit similar offence and/or will flee from trial, and she might tamper with evidence or influence/ intimidate the witnesses. On a Court query, he does not dispute that other co-accused, who are similarly placed as the petitioner, have been granted bail.

5. I have heard rival contentions of learned counsels for the parties and have gone through the case file.

6. On a Court query, learned State counsel, on instructions from Inspector Rajeev, submits that after filing of challan, charges were framed way back on 19.01.2023. Investigation *qua* petitioner is complete, she is thus not required for custodial interrogation. Allegations against petitioner are a matter of trial at this stage. Bail allows an accused to maintain his freedom until his guilt or innocence is determined. Out of total 51 witnesses, none has been examined till date. Trial is proceeding only at a snail's pace. Whereas, petitioner has already been languishing in jail for the past more than 09 months in preventive custody, being behind bars since 11.12.2022.

7. Petitioner is being kept in preventive custody merely on an unfounded suspicion that if she is let out, she may either tamper with evidence and/or influence witnesses. There is no probability of tampering with evidence as the same has already been seized by the investigating agency. Offence allegedly committed by petitioner is of non-violent nature and in that sense, her release on bail is not a threat to society at large by committing any violent crime.

8. It is stated that petitioner is 47-year old divorcee lady having minor children, who are living in sheer penury in her absence. Being family person and having fixed abode, it is unlikely that she poses any flight risk and/or will flee from trial proceedings.

9. Co-accused of the petitioners, attributed with similar role, have been granted concession of bail by this Court and learned Court below.

10. Considering the overall scenario and without commenting on the merits of the case, the instant petition is allowed. I am of the view that no useful purpose would be served to keep the petitioner in further preventive custody.
11. Accordingly, petitioner is ordered to be released on bail, in case not required in any other case, on her furnishing bail bonds and surety bonds to the satisfaction of learned trial Court, where her case is being tried and in case he/she is not available, before learned Duty Judge, as the case may be.
12. Any observations made and/or submissions noted hereinabove shall not have any effect on merits of the case as the same are for limited purpose of bail hearing alone and learned trial Court shall proceed without being influenced with this order.
13. Pending application(s), if any, shall also stand disposed of.

(ARUN MONGA)
JUDGE

September 19, 2023
Ajay

Whether speaking/reasoned:	Yes/No
Whether reportable:	Yes/No