

2025:PHHC:077496



IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB & HARYANA
AT CHANDIGARH

209

CRM-M-10849-2025

Date of decision: July 01, 2025

RANBIR SINGH

.....Petitioner

Versus

STATE OF PUNJAB

.....Respondent

CORAM: HON'BLE MRS. JUSTICE MANJARI NEHRU KAUL

Present: Mr. S.K. Garg Narwana, Sr. Advocate with
Mr. Tarunveer Vashisht, Advocate
Mr. Nitin Sachdeva, Advocate and
Mr. Mukul Ahuja, Advocate
for the petitioner.

Mr. Amit Rana, Sr. DAG, Punjab
with ASI Gulsher Singh.

MANJARI NEHRU KAUL, J.

1. The instant petition is the third petition filed under Section 483 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 for grant of regular bail to the petitioner in case FIR No.32 dated 14.10.2024 (Annexure P-1) under Section 13(1)A read with Section 13(2) of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 and Sections 409, 465, 467, 468, 471 and 120-B of the Indian Penal Code, 1860, registered at Police Station Vigilance Bureau, District Ludhiana.

2. Learned Senior counsel appearing on behalf of the petitioner contends that the petitioner, who was serving as Executive Engineer (XEN) with the Municipal Corporation (MC), Ludhiana, has been falsely implicated in the present FIR, annexed as Annexure P-1. The allegations pertain to the alleged wrongful procurement of a sum of Rs.3,16,58,000/- by way of temporary advance from the Contingency Fund of the Municipal Corporation, purportedly under the pretext of making payments to PSPCL.



However, it is submitted that the said amount was neither misappropriated nor diverted for any personal gain by the petitioner.

3. Drawing the attention of this Court to the contents of Annexure P-2, learned Senior counsel submits that the allegations lack substance, as the petitioner had obtained necessary approvals from the Commissioner of the Municipal Corporation before withdrawing the amount in question. Moreover, out of the total advance of Rs.3,16,58,000/-, a substantial amount of Rs.3,12,23,729/- has already been deposited back into the bank account of the Municipal Corporation.

4. It has been further submitted by the learned Senior counsel that the petitioner has been in custody since 14.10.2024. Although the challan was presented in February 2025, charges have not yet been framed. The likelihood of the trial concluding in the near future remains remote as the requisite sanction for prosecution is still awaited. Attention is also drawn to the fact that co-accused Pankaj Garg and Rajinder Singh, who stand on similar footing, have already been granted the concession of anticipatory bail by this Court and the Hon'ble Supreme Court. Accordingly, a prayer is made for grant of regular bail to the petitioner.

5. *Per contra*, learned State counsel has vehemently opposed the prayer and submissions made by the counsel opposite, and reiterated the allegations levelled against the petitioner and argued that the petitioner, in connivance with co-accused, obtained Rs.3,16,58,000/- from the Contingency Fund of the Municipal Corporation. However, upon



instructions, learned State counsel is unable to dispute that only an amount of Rs.4,34,692/- remains to be accounted for, while the remainder had been duly deposited back with the Municipal Corporation. Learned State counsel, on further instructions, does not dispute the custody period of the petitioner, nor the stage of trial. Furthermore, he has not denied, on instructions, that the similarly situated co-accused have already been enlarged on bail.

6. I have heard learned counsel for the parties and perused the relevant material placed on record.

7. The petitioner, while being posted as XEN with the Municipal Corporation, Ludhiana during the period 2021-22, is alleged to have withdrawn a temporary advance of Rs.3,16,58,000/- from the Contingency Fund. However, the said withdrawal was purportedly made after obtaining due approval from the Commissioner of the Municipal Corporation, and the amount except Rs.4,34,692/- has already been deposited back into the bank account of the Corporation.

8. Considering that the case is primarily based on documentary evidence, and given that the petitioner has been in custody since 14.10.2024, with the challan presented in February 2025, but charges yet to be framed, in view of the sanction having not been accorded till date, despite the case being adjourned by the learned trial Court on as many as 11 dates, the possibility of the trial concluding in the near future seems remote.

9. In view of these circumstances, and taking into account the fact that co-accused Pankaj Garg and Rajinder Singh have already been granted



the concession of anticipatory bail by this Court and the Hon’ble Supreme Court, the petitioner is entitled to the similar relief.

10. Accordingly, the instant petition is allowed, and the petitioner be admitted to bail on his furnishing bail/surety bonds to the satisfaction of the Trial Court/Duty Magistrate concerned.

11. However, it is made clear that anything observed hereinabove shall not be construed to be an expression of opinion on the merits of the case.

12. Needless to say, in case the petitioner misuses the concession of bail, the State would be at liberty to seek cancellation of the same.

July 01, 2025
Jaspreet Kaur

(MANJARI NEHRU KAUL)
JUDGE

Whether speaking/reasoned : Yes/No

Whether reportable : Yes/No