



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

**CRM-M-24336-2025**

Date of decision: 13<sup>th</sup> May, 2025

Ravinder Kumar Bansal

... Petitioner

Versus

State of Punjab

... Respondent

**CORAM: HON'BLE MRS. JUSTICE MANJARI NEHRU KAUL**

Present: Mr. Preetinder S. Ahluwalia & Ms. Simerpreet Sekhon,  
Advocates for the petitioner.

Mr. Amit Rana, Sr. Dy. Advocate General, Punjab  
for the respondent/State.

**MANJARI NEHRU KAUL, J.**

1. The petitioner is seeking the concession of anticipatory bail under Section 482 of BNSS in case FIR No.18 dated 07.04.2025 under Sections 7 and 7A of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 and Section 318(4) and 61(2) of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 registered at Police Station Vigilance Bureau, Jalandhar Range, Punjab.

2. Learned counsel for the petitioner has contended that the petitioner, posted as Regional Transport Officer (RTO), has been falsely implicated in the instant FIR which pertains to allegations of issuance of driving licenses in exchange for illegal gratification. It is submitted that the petitioner is not named in the FIR (Annexure P-1), nor has any specific or overt act been attributed to him by the complainant. Attention has been drawn to Annexure P-1, which, as per the learned counsel, contains the original complaint made by the informant. It has been

argued that a perusal of the said complaint shows that the complainant had clearly identified certain individuals involved in the alleged acts of corruption, yet the petitioner was neither named nor implicated therein.

3. It has been further contended that the entire basis of implication of the petitioner arises solely from the disclosure statement of co-accused Jatinder Singh, who was working as a Junior Assistant in the office of the RTO. It has been argued that such a disclosure statement, being inadmissible in evidence under the law, cannot form the sole foundation for implicating the petitioner. The learned counsel has also submitted that the petitioner was holding the substantive charge of SDM, Balachaur and was only given additional charge of RTO, S.B.S. Nagar on 20.01.2025. By that time, the contract with the agency responsible for conducting driving tests had already expired in December 2024, and therefore, the allegations of illegal issuance of licenses during that period are implausible and baseless.

4. On being put to notice, learned State counsel has filed an affidavit of Ashwani Kumar, PPS, DSP, Vigilance Bureau Unit SBS Nagar, which is taken on record subject to all just exceptions and a copy thereof has been supplied to the counsel opposite.

5. Learned State counsel, on instructions from Inspector Chamkaur Singh Parmar, has strongly opposed the prayer made by the counsel opposite and has submitted that the allegations against the petitioner are grave, specific and supported by preliminary evidence. While drawing the attention of this Court to the reply, which has been filed in the Court today, it has been further submitted that the petitioner, being the RTO and the final signing authority, was in a commanding position to facilitate and execute the corrupt practice. It has been

submitted that the petitioner misused his official position to issue driving licenses without conducting driving tests, thereby not only committing corruption but also endangering public safety.

6. Learned State counsel has further submitted that during investigation, the co-accused Jatinder Singh, in his disclosure statement, has detailed the modus operandi of the entire corrupt network and the manner in which bribe amounts were collected and distributed amongst various public servants, including the petitioner. It has been submitted, on further instructions, that the investigation has also led to the recovery of 125 files in which certain codes were allegedly used to indicate the beneficiaries of this illegal activity. Statements under Section 180 of the BNSS of at least 8 such beneficiaries have been recorded, and all these individuals have supported the version of the prosecution, stating that they were issued licenses without undergoing any driving test.

7. It has still further been submitted by the learned State counsel that out of the 125 files scrutinized so far, 102 have been found to bear the approval signatures of the petitioner. This fact, as per the learned State counsel, prima facie corroborates the petitioner's active involvement in the alleged corrupt practice. It is also pointed out that the digital ID of the petitioner, which is necessary to access and verify the authenticity of the approvals granted on the Sarathi platform, is yet to be recovered and examined. Learned state counsel has submitted that custodial interrogation of the petitioner is necessary to unravel the deeper nexus and identify the full extent of the alleged racket involving both Government functionaries and private agents.

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

9. The Hon'ble Supreme Court, in 'Devinder Kumar Bansal vs. Union of India', 2025 Live Law (SC) 291, has unequivocally laid down the parameters governing the grant of anticipatory bail in cases involving corruption. It has been categorically held that the grant of anticipatory bail in corruption cases should be an exception and not the norm. Such discretion should be exercised only in the rarest of rare circumstances where the petitioner demonstrates exceptional grounds justifying protection from arrest. The Hon'ble Apex Court emphasized that corruption by public servants erodes the trust of citizens in public institutions and is a serious offence which undermines the very fabric of governance.

10. Adverting to the present case, the material placed on record indicates that the petitioner, being the RTO and the final approving authority, prima facie played a central role in issuance of driving licenses without the mandatory driving test in exchange for illegal gratification. The recovery of 125 files, 102 of which were approved by the petitioner, and the testimonies of beneficiaries who received licenses without testing, prima facie point towards the petitioner's complicity in the alleged offence. The contention that the petitioner was not named in the FIR loses significance in light of the subsequent developments during investigation which reveal a well-orchestrated racket in which the petitioner appears to be a key player.

11. Moreover, the implication of the petitioner is not based solely on the disclosure statement of a co-accused, but is prima facie supported by documentary evidence and statements recorded under Section 180 BNSS. The allegations are not only grave in nature but also

raise serious concerns about abuse of public office, systemic corruption and potential threat to public safety.

12. This Court therefore concurs with the prayer made by the learned State counsel for dismissing the instant petition as the custodial interrogation of the petitioner would be essential to probe the depth of the conspiracy, recover crucial digital evidence, and identify the larger nexus. Granting pre-arrest bail at this stage would seriously hamper the ongoing investigation. In view of the foregoing discussion, no ground is made out to extend the extraordinary concession of anticipatory bail to the petitioner. The petition sands dismissed. 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.

(MANJARI NEHRU KAUL)  
JUDGE

May 13, 2025  
*rps*

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|---------------------------|--------|
| Whether speaking/reasoned | Yes/No |
| Whether reportable        | Yes/No |