



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

CRM-M No.40944 of 2024
Date of decision: 7th January, 2025

Vijay Kumar Singla

... Petitioner

Versus

State of Punjab

... Respondent

CORAM: HON'BLE MRS. JUSTICE MANJARI NEHRU KAUL

Present: Mr. Bipan Ghai, Senior Advocate with
Mr. Nikhil Ghai & Mr. Gurjas Gill,
Advocates for the petitioner.

Mr. Jasdeep S. Gill, Addl. Advocate General, Punjab
for the respondent/State.

Mr. Manjinder Bhullar, Advocate for the complainant.

MANJARI NEHRU KAUL, J.

1. The petitioner is seeking the concession of bail under Section 438 Cr.P.C. in case FIR No.14 dated 04.06.2024 under Sections 7, 7-A of Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 as amended by Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Act, 2018 IPC read with Section 120-B of IPC registered at Police Station Vigilance Bureau, District Bathinda.

2. Learned senior counsel for the petitioner has contended that the petitioner has been falsely implicated in the present case due to ulterior motives. It has been argued that the allegations of bribery lack credibility and are result of political vendetta, as the petitioner had previously lodged complaints against the complainant with higher authorities, including the SSP and the Deputy Commissioner, Mansa. It

has been further argued that the petitioner, serving as the President of the Nagar Council, Mansa, does not possess any direct administrative authority over the processing or approval of bills, as the responsibility for such matter lies with the Government employees, including the Executive Officer. Learned senior counsel has emphasized the improbability of the petitioner directly communicating with the complainant about the alleged bribe over the phone or instructing him to hand over money to co-accused Jatinder Singh (Junior Engineer).

3. Additionally, it has been argued by the learned senior counsel that there has been no direct recovery of any bribe amount made from the petitioner, and the entries in the pocket-diary allegedly mentioning the name of the petitioner are fabricated and lack any evidentiary value.

4. Per contra, learned State counsel while vehemently opposing the prayer and submissions made by the counsel opposite, has submitted that the petitioner is the prime accused in the present case and has played a central role in orchestrating the demand and acceptance of bribes. It has been further submitted by the learned State counsel that the petitioner demanded a commission of 18% for clearing bills related to development works, of which his share was 5%, with the remaining amount distributed among other officials, including Junior Engineer, AME, and Accountants. The learned State counsel, on instructions, has further apprised the Court that a Vigilance trap was conducted, during which co-accused JE Jatinder Singh was apprehended with ₹1.00 lakh laced with chemical powder, corroborating the allegations levelled by

the complainant. A pocket-diary recovered from co-accused Jatinder Singh, Junior Engineer, contained entries explicitly detailing the distribution of bribe money, with ₹37,500/- purportedly allocated to the petitioner.

5. It has also been pointed out by the learned State counsel, on instructions, that certain video and call recordings submitted by the complainant, prima facie establish the direct involvement of the petitioner in the demand and acceptance of bribes. It is argued that the custodial interrogation of the petitioner is imperative to trace the use of the bribe money and understand the modus operandi of the accused.

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

7. This Court has carefully considered the submissions made by both the parties and examined the material placed on record including the FIR, which has been annexed as Annexure P-1, and the other material on record. Prima facie, the allegations against the petitioner are grave and specific. As per the allegations in the FIR, the petitioner is alleged to have demanded and accepted bribes under the guise of facilitating the clearance of bills for the work which had been allotted to the complainant and thereafter executed by him. The evidence collected by the Investigating Agency, which includes not only the recovery of chemically treated currency notes from the co-accused, but also diary entries detailing the distribution of bribe money, and audio-visual recordings, lends significant weight to the allegations. The contention raised by the learned senior counsel for the petitioner regarding political

vendetta, the absence of any direct recovery of bribe money, and lack of direct involvement in the clearance process of the bills cannot be examined conclusively at this stage. However, the nature of the allegations and the material on record necessitate a deeper investigation, which, as submitted by the learned State counsel, requires the custodial interrogation of the petitioner to uncover the entire modus operandi.

8. In view of the serious and specific allegations levelled against the petitioner, and considering the necessity of custodial interrogation to facilitate a thorough investigation, this Court does not deem it fit to extend extraordinary concession of anticipatory bail to the petitioner. The petition as such stands 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

January 7, 2025
rps

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