



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

Sr. No.203**CRM-M-42161-2025****Date of Decision: 03.09.2025**

Raman Arora

.... Petitioner

Versus

State of Punjab

... Respondent

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE TRIBHUVAN DAHIYA

Present: Mr. Randeep Singh Rai, Senior Advocate, with
Mr. P.S. Ahluwalia, Advocate,
Mr. Gurmohan Singh Bedi, Advocate,
Mr. Pawandeep Singh, Advocate,
Ms. Ambika Bedi, Advocate,
Mr. Jaiveer Singh, Advocate, and
Ms. Rubina, Advocate, for the petitioner

Mr. Chanchal K. Singla, Additional Advocate General, Punjab,
assisted by Ms. Kavita Joshi, Advocate.

TRIBHUVAN DAHIYA, J. (ORAL)

The petition has been filed under Section 483 BNSS, 2023, seeking grant of regular bail in FIR No.23 dated 14.05.2025, registered under Sections 7 and 7(a) of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 2018 [Sections 61(2), 238 and 308(2) BNSS have been added subsequently during investigation] at P.S. Vigilance Bureau Range Jalandhar, District Jalandhar.

2. The FIR has been lodged on a complaint, dated 14.05.2025, made by the President and members of the Engineer's and Building Designer Association, Jalandhar, to the Vigilance Bureau, alleging demand of bribe by Assistant Town Planner (ATP) Sukhdev Vashist, employed with Municipal Corporation, Jalandhar. He had been intentionally keeping files pending with him regarding grant of approval of site plans. Whenever any



member of the Association used to visit him to enquire about the pending files, he would demand bribes for approving the same. When the ATP himself visited the sites, he would threaten people that their premises would be sealed and buildings demolished. He demanded ₹30,000 from a member of the Association to clear the file bearing no.210025. After registration of the FIR, the ATP was arrested. During interrogation, he made a disclosure statement that he used to take bribes at the petitioner's behest, who is a Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) Punjab from Jalandhar Central constituency. And the petitioner was nominated as an accused in the case vide DDR No.03, dated 23.05.2025, and arrested on the same day.

3. Learned senior counsel for the petitioner contended that it is a case of false implication on account of internal party rivalry. The petitioner has been framed in the case to settle scores with him for going against the wishes of higher party officials, who also suspect he is trying to join ranks with the opposition. Besides, he is in custody for over three months, and investigation is already over as challan/final report has been presented. The case could not be taken up for framing of charge as the sanction to prosecute him has not been received, and the Special Judge adjourned the matter on that account vide order dated 20.08.2025. It is also contended that there is no direct evidence against the petitioner, and he has been nominated as an accused only on the basis of a disclosure statement of a co-accused to the police while in custody, which is inadmissible evidence.

4. Learned State counsel has not disputed that the petitioner is in custody since 23.05.2025, and challan stands presented in the Court on 12.07.2025. Thereafter, supplementary challan has also been filed on 19.07.2025; but charge has not been framed as yet. Further investigation of the case is pending to unearth the trail of money, allegedly received by the

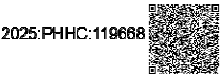


petitioner as bribe. He has, however, fervently opposed grant of bail on the ground that the petitioner is an MLA, and there is every likelihood of his threatening the witnesses. In this regard, he specifically mentioned that one of the victims, Yashpal Khanna, got his statement recorded with the Investigating Officer on 13.06.2025 that he had been threatened through a 'yes man' of the petitioner against recording his testimony in the case. Later, a legal notice was served upon the said witness on behalf of the petitioner for giving statement against him, and producing voice recordings of conversation regarding receipt of bribe money. In this manner, the witness has been pressurised. It is, however, not disputed that the police have not initiated any action on the statement of Yashpal Khanna, nor have they been able to identify the said 'yes man' so far.

4.1. Learned State counsel has mentioned about another witness, Dr. Mukesh Joshi, who allegedly gave bribes to the petitioner with regard to construction of a basement in his plot, has also been threatened of dire consequences through various quarters. It remains undisputed that on these allegations also the police have not taken any action so far. Besides, as pointed out by Mr. Rai, it was recorded in the order, dated 04.05.2022, passed by Additional Sessions Judge, Jalandhar, directing release of Dr. Joshi on interim bail, that digging work of the basement had been stopped midway and the dug-up area had been filled with earth by the owners/Dr. Joshi and family themselves.

5. Submissions advanced by learned counsel for the parties have been considered.

6. Apparently, the petitioner has been implicated in the case on the basis of a disclosure statement of the co-accused, and his complicity is a matter of trial which will take some time to conclude as charge is still to be



framed. He is in custody for over three months, and the investigation is complete as challan/final report *qua* him already stands presented in the Court. Also, the State has not been able to establish on the basis of any credible material that the petitioner has threatened any witness.

7. Considering the totality of facts aforementioned, this Court is of the view that no useful purpose will be served by confining the petitioner to custody any longer. Accordingly, the petition is allowed, and he is directed to be released on bail subject to his furnishing bail and surety bonds to the satisfaction of the trial Court/Duty Magistrate concerned.

8. In case the petitioner attempts to influence or threaten the witnesses, tampers with the evidence, hampers or delays the trial in any manner, the State will be at liberty to seek cancellation of his bail.

(TRIBHUVAN DAHIYA)
JUDGE

03.09.2025
Maninder

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