

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

2025/PHHC/173241



106

CRM-M-68682-2025

Ranjit Ray

....Petitioner

V/s

Directorate of Revenue Intelligence, Ludhiana

....Respondent

Date of decision: 11.12.2025

Date of uploading: 11.12.2025

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE SUMEET GOEL

Present: Mr. Randeep Singh Waraich (Rana),
Advocate for the petitioner.

Mr. Sourabh Goel, Special Public Prosecutor
for the respondent-DRI.

SUMEET GOEL, J. (Oral)

1. Present petition has been filed on behalf of the petitioner seeking grant of anticipatory/pre-arrest bail under Section 482 of Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 (hereinafter to be referred as 'BNSS') in case/Crime No.DRI/LDZU/855/INTI/2025/858 under Section not known (likely to be Section 20 of the NDPS Act, 1985), registered at IA. DRI Ludhiana Zone, District Ludhiana.

2. The gravamen of the FIR is that a car bearing registration No. PB09R-0797 was found parked in an abandoned area. The said vehicle was intercepted and taken into possession by the DRI team. Upon conducting a search, the car was found to contain *Ganja* concealed in 36 plastic packets wrapped with tape. On weighing, the total gross weight of the contraband was found to be 31.352 kg. During the course of investigation, it was found

that the said contraband was being transported/smuggled by the petitioner

(herein) in the aforesaid vehicle. Although, the registration of the car does not stand in the name of the petitioner (herein), it has come on record that he had already sold the vehicle to another person on the basis of an affidavit. The concealment of the actual ownership and use of the car appears to have been deliberate and intentional with the intention to facilitate the transportation of narcotics from one place to another. As per the CRCL test report, the seized substance has been confirmed to be *Ganja*. It is further the case of the prosecution that the petitioner is already facing trial in another case—DRI vs. Shivam Singh and Others—pertaining to the recovery of 428.13 kg of *Ganja*. The alleged recovery clearly falls within the ambit of commercial quantity under the NDPS Act. Upon these set of allegations, the instant FIR/case was registered against the petitioner.

3. Learned counsel for the petitioner has iterated that the petitioner has been falsely implicated in the present case. Learned counsel appearing for the petitioner has further submitted that the neither the petitioner is registered owner nor the driver of the car in question. He has further submitted that the petitioner had purchased the car in question from one Satnam Singh Sandhu, but the transfer was never effected in his name. It is further submitted that the car in question thereafter had been sold to one Kuldeep Singh, vide agreement dated 05.02.2025. Learned counsel has further iterated that no recovery, either of any narcotic substance or any other incriminating material, has been effected from the petitioner. Furthermore, there is no independent or corroborative evidence linking the petitioner to the alleged offence and his name does not even find mention in the FIR. Learned counsel further asserts that no further recovery is likely to be effected at his instance and, hence, his custodial interrogation is neither

warranted nor justified. Learned counsel further asserts that the petitioner has no intention of evading the process of law and undertakes to cooperate fully with the investigation. It is next submitted by the learned counsel that the petitioner is ready to join the investigation and hence no useful purpose would be served by sending him behind bars. On the basis of the aforementioned submissions, the grant of the instant petition is entreated for.

4. *Conversely*, Mr. Sourabh Goel, Special Public Prosecutor appearing on behalf of the respondent-DRI has opposed the grant of anticipatory bail to the petitioner by arguing that the allegations levelled against the petitioner are grave and pertains to illicit trafficking of narcotics. He has further submitted that the petitioner is actively involved in the illicit trade of narcotic substances and has played a substantive role in the supply of the contraband in question. He has also raised submissions in tandem with the reply dated 11.12.2025 filed in Court today on behalf of the respondent, relevant whereof reads thus:

“3. xxxxxxxxxxxx

m) That in order to find out the ownership of the unclaimed vehicle bearing registration number PB09R0797, found parked in the area of village Jaspal Bangar, Ludhiana, a letter dated 06.06.2025, Annexure R-1 was written to the District Transport Officer, Regional Transport office, Ajit Nagar, Kapurthala, Punjab with a request to provide the ownership details of the vehicle, registration certificate, KYC details and other details submitted at the time of registration.

n) RTO, Kapurthala, on 16.06.2025, intimated that the said vehicle. was registered in the name of Shri Avtar Singh Sandhu, resident of Hadiabad, Satnampura, Tehsil Phagwara, District Kapurthala Based on information received from the RTO, a letter dated 17.06.2025 was written to the Branch Manager, Indian Overseas Bank, Phagwara, for the submission of details of Sh Avtar Singh Sandhu in relation to the Financial Loan sanctioned for a car bearing registration number PB09R0797.

Subsequently, on 20.06.2025, information was received from the Indian Overseas Bank vide email providing the KYC details of the vehicle loan. The loan was in the name of the same individual (Sh. Avtar Singh), with an address at House No. 20, Ward No. 20, Killa Mohalla, Phagwara. Upon discreet local enquiry, it was ascertained that Shri Avtar Singh Sandhu had shifted his residence to Sandhu Enclave, Phagwara. Copy of letter dated 16.6.2025 received from RTO Kapurthala is Annexure R-2 and copy of information dated 20.6.2025 received from Indian Overseas Bank, Kapurthala is Annexure R-3.

o) That a search under Audio Visual Recording was conducted at the premises of Avtar Singh, premises having address Sandhu Enclave, Hadiabad, Phagwara, Kapurthala, on 24.06.2025 panchnama dt 24.06.2025. During the search, it was informed telephonically by Sh. Avtar Singh Sandu (not present at the premises during the search) stated that the vehicle in question had been sold to Dinesh, a car dealer based in Himachal Pradesh. Subsequently, vide email communication dated 27.06.2025, it was communicated by Sh. Avtar Singh Sandhu that the car was sold by him to Sh. Rajesh Sharma, s/o Sh ML Sharma, resident of near Civil Hospital, Hira Nagar, Amb, District Una, Himachal Pradesh.

p) That on 26.06.2025, email communication was also received was received from Rajesh Sharma, confirming the purchase of the said vehicle from Sh. Avtar Singh Sandhu and further sale of the said vehicle to Shri Gurpreet Singh, S/o Mohinder Pal Singh, resident of Seth Hukum Chand Colony, Jalandhar, on 16.03.2023. Email communication from Shri Gurpreet Singh confirming that he had purchased the said vehicle from Sh. Rajesh Sharma, s/o Sh. Manohar Lal Sharma, and that he had further sold the said vehicle to Shri Sumit Jindal, resident of Mohalla Bhandaria, Raikot, on 20.05.2023. Based on the above correspondence, summonses were issued to Shri Rajesh Sharma on 30.06.2025 and Shri Gurpreet Singh on 30.06.2025 to record their statements under Section 67 of the NDPS Act, 1985.

q) That the statement of Sh. Rajesh Sharma was recorded on 07.07.2025, wherein he stated that he started doing the business of sale and purchase of old vehicles in 2015. He further stated that he has good family relations with Shri Avtar Singh Sandhu and that Sh. Avtar Singh had given him the car to sell it for a good price. He further stated that he had kept the vehicle with him for 3 years, along with all the papers duly signed by Shri Avtar Singh Sandhu for the transfer of the said vehicle. Subsequently, he sold the said vehicle to Shri Gurpreet Singh on 16.03.2023 and gave all the transfer papers along with the car to him.

r) That the statement of Shri Gurpreet Singh was recorded on 07.07.2025, wherein he stated that he is a car dealer and involved in the sale and purchase of old vehicles on a commission basis since 2001. He further stated that he had purchased the car in cash from Sh Rajesh Sharma, s/o Manohar Lal Sharma. He further stated that he had sold the vehicle to Sh Sumit Jindal, s/o Subhash Jindal, on 20.05.2023. He submitted copies of receipts and affidavits in relation to the purchase and sale of the car. He also submitted a screenshot of an online receipt of Rs 50,000/- from Sumit Jindal as a payment in relation to the car.

s) That the summons was issued to Sh. Sumit Jindal on 08.07.2025 to record his statement under section 67 of the NDPS Act, 1985. In his statement dated 09.07.2025, Sh. Sumit Jindal stated that he had purchased the vehicle from Shri Gurpreet Singh on 20.05.2023 and later sold it to Shri Sunil Kumar, resident of Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar, Dhandra Road, Ludhiana, on 02.09.2024. He stated that he had paid Rs 50,000/- online for the purchase of the car and the remaining amount in cash. He further stated that he had sold the car through Dhaliwal CARZ to Sh. Sunil Kumar. He also submitted a copy of the delivery receipt mentioning the sale of the car to Shri Sunil Kumar.

t) That the summons was issued to sh. Sunil Kumar on 09.07.2025 to record his statement under Section 67 of the NDPS Act, 1985. The statement of Sh. Sunil Kumar was recorded on 16.07.2025, wherein he stated that he had purchased the vehicle through Dhaliwal CARZ from Sh. Sumit Jindal subsequently sold it to Ranjit Rai S/o Musafir Rai, resident of Garib Nagar, Amar Colony, Jaspal Bangar, Ludhiana, through Sh. Harvinder Singh, owner of Prime Cars, on 03.11.2024. He also submitted a copy of the Axis Bank account in which a sum of about 2 Lakhs was received as a payment against the sale of the car. He also submitted a copy of the delivery receipt dated 03.11.2024, Annexure R-4, against which the car was delivered to Ranjit Rai.

u) That the summon was also issued to Sh. Harvinder Singh s/o Sh. Ajit Singh, on 16.07.2025, to record his statement under section 67 of the NDPS Act, 1985. On the same date, the statement of Harvinder Singh was recorded. He stated that he is running a business in the name of Prime Cars and is engaged in the sale and purchase of old vehicles. He said that he facilitated the sale of the car to Sh. Ranjit Rai s/o Musafir Rai from Sh. Sunil Kumar. He submitted the original copy of the delivery receipt of the car to Sh. Ranjit Rai and the original affidavit of Sh. Ranjit Rai affirmed that he had purchased the said car.

v) On being questioned as to why the delivery receipt and the affidavit have the name of Sh. Avtar Singh Sandhu, he stated that it was a common

practice followed by them to mention the names of the owner and buyer directly.

w) That during the investigation, the ownership and possession of the seized vehicle were traced through successive transfer documents, delivery receipts, and witness statements, ultimately establishing that the car had come into possession of Sh. Ranjit Rai S/o Musafir Rai on 03.11.2024. Statements of witnesses and documentary evidence, such as an affidavit and delivery note, confirmed that the accused was the last possessor of the vehicle.

x) That the accused had filed a bail application under Section 482 of the Bhartiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita 2023 for the grant of Anticipatory Bail/Interim Bail in the event of Arrest. The Ld. Ludhiana court vide order dated 04.10.2025 dismissed the anticipatory bail filed by Sh. Ranjit Rai.

y) It is pertinent to mention here that the petitioner in his application had claimed that he had already sold the offending vehicle on 05.02.2025 to one Kuldeep Kumar s/o of Sh. Vijay Shankar. He further submitted that he is ready to join the investigation and cooperate with the IO whenever he is called upon. However, he has neither responded to summonses dated 16.09.2025, 25.09.2025 and 08.10.2025 nor joined the investigation yet.”

4.1. Learned Special Public Prosecutor has, accordingly, submitted that from the abovesaid investigation, it has come on record that the petitioner has been involved in the instant case. He, thus, submits that the reply filed on behalf of the respondent establish involvement of the petitioner in the supply of contraband. Furthermore, the custodial interrogation of the petitioner is stated to be essential for the purpose of unearthing the complete supply chain of the narcotic substances and for effecting further recovery of the contraband, if any. Granting bail to the petitioner, at this stage, may seriously hamper the ongoing investigation and embolden the petitioner to tamper with evidence or influence key witnesses, many of whom may be susceptible to pressure or intimidation. Given the gravity of the offence, the larger public interest involved in curbing the menace of drug trafficking, and the potential threat to the fair conduct of the

trial, it is respectfully submitted that the petitioner does not deserve the concession of anticipatory bail and it is prayed that the present petition deserves to be dismissed.

5. I have heard the learned counsel for the rival parties and have gone through the available record of the case.

6. As per the case put forth by the prosecution, indubitably, serious allegations have been levelled against the petitioner. A perusal of the reply filed reveals that, on the basis of transfer documents, delivery receipts, and statements of witnesses, the prosecution has been able to *prima facie* establish that the vehicle in question was in the possession of the petitioner. It is not in dispute that the petitioner is involved in another case relating to the recovery of 428.13 kg of *ganja*. The aforesaid instances reflect a recurring pattern of conduct on the part of the petitioner and his deliberate and conscious role as supplier of contraband. Thus, the contention that the petitioner has been implicated solely on the basis of an inadmissible disclosure does not merit acceptance.

7. The petitioner has been implicated for the commission of offences punishable under the NDPS Act with specific allegations of facilitating illicit trafficking of contraband substances. Furthermore, as per the prosecution, the petitioner played a pivotal role in the supply chain, having allegedly supplied a portion of the recovered contraband to co-accused which led to the recovery of the contraband in question. The investigation so far indicates the involvement of the petitioner in a well-organized network, engaged in the illegal distribution of psychotropic substances. The nature and gravity of the offence, coupled with the evidentiary material on record, justify further custodial interrogation to

unravel the larger conspiracy and identify the other potential co-conspirators.

8. The nature of the allegations, coupled with the possibility of the petitioner being part of a larger nexus engaged in the unlawful trade of narcotic substances, raises serious concerns that cannot be brushed aside at this nascent stage of the investigation. The apprehension expressed by the prosecution that the petitioner, if released on bail, may abscond or attempt to influence witnesses who may be vulnerable to coercion does not appear to be without merit. Given the seriousness of the offence, the stage of investigation, the possibility of tampering with evidence or obstructing justice, and the overarching public interest in deterring the menace of narcotic drug trafficking, this Court is of the view that the petitioner does not merit the concession of bail at this juncture. Further, in light of the serious allegations, the custodial interrogation of the petitioner may be indispensable and crucial for unearthing the broader conspiracy and identifying other potential accomplices, information which may be within the exclusive knowledge of the petitioner. The grant of anticipatory bail at this premature stage may seriously prejudice the ongoing investigation and potentially result in tampering with evidence or influencing material witnesses.

9. It is befitting to mention here that while considering a plea for grant of anticipatory bail, the Court has to equilibrate between safeguarding individual rights and protecting societal interest(s). The Court ought to reckon with the magnitude and nature of the offence; the role attributed to the accused; the need for fair and free investigation as also for reaching impact of such alleged iniquities on society. A profitable reference in this

regard is being made to the dicta passed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court titled as *State v. Anil Sharma, (1997) 7 SCC 187 : 1997 SCC (Cri) 1039*], the Supreme Court held as under, relevant whereof reads as under:

“6. We find force in the submission of CBI that custodial interrogation is qualitatively more elicitation-oriented than questioning a suspect who is well-ensconced with a favourable order under Section 438 of the Code. In a case like this, effective interrogation of a suspected person is of tremendous advantage in disinterring many useful informations and also materials which would have been concealed. Success in such interrogation would elude if the suspected person knows that he is well protected and insulated by a pre-arrest bail order during the time he is interrogated. Very often interrogation in such a condition would reduce to a mere ritual. The argument that the custodial interrogation is fraught with the danger of the person being subjected to third-degree methods need not be countenanced, for, such an argument can be advanced by all accused in all criminal cases. The Court has to presume that responsible police officers would conduct themselves in a responsible manner and that those entrusted with the task of disinterring offences would not conduct themselves as offenders.”

At this stage, there is no material on record to hold that *prima facie* case is not made out against the petitioner. The material which has come on record and preliminary investigation, appear to establish a reasonable basis for the accusation of the petitioner. Thus, it is not appropriate to grant anticipatory bail to the petitioner, as it would necessarily cause impediment in effective investigation.

10. Accordingly, this Court is of the considered opinion that the petitioner does not deserve the concession of anticipatory bail in the factual *milieu* of the case in hand. Moreover, custodial interrogation of the petitioner may be necessary for an effective investigation & to unravel the truth. The petition is, thus, devoid of merits and is hereby dismissed.

11. Nothing said hereinabove shall be deemed to be an expression of opinion upon merits of the case/investigation.

12. Pending application(s), if any, shall also stand disposed off.

(SUMEET GOEL)
JUDGE

December 11, 2025
Naveen

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