CGHC010371212026 2026:CGHC:43482

NAFR

RAVI SHANKAR MANDAVI Digitally signed by RAVI SHANKAR MANDAVI

HIGH COURT OF CHHATTISGARH AT BILASPUR

MCRCA No. 1603 of 2026

1 - Suresh Chandra Soni S/o Late Ramchandra Soni, Aged About 74 Years R/o Vyavahri, District - Sahadol, Madhya Pradesh.
Current Address - A - 10, Green Garden Colony, Mangla, Shubham Vihar, Bilaspur, C.G.

... Applicant

versus

1 - State Of Chhattisgarh Through Chhattisgarh State Economic Offence Investigation Bureau, Telibandha, Raipur, C.G.

... Respondent

(Cause title is taken from CIS)

For Applicant	**:** Mr. Chandresh Shrivastava, Advocate
For State/Respondent	**:** Mr. Afroz Khan, Panel Lawyer

Hon'ble Shri Justice Parth Prateem Sahu

Order on Board

07/10/2026

1. Applicant has preferred First bail application under Section 482 of Bhartiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 for grant of anticipatory bail as he apprehends his arrest in connection with Crime No. 25/2010 registered at Police Station- State Economic Offence Investigation Bureau / Anti-Corruption Bureau, District Raipur (C.G.) for offence punishable under Section 120 B, 409, 467, 468,

471 of IPC and Sections 13(1)(c), 13(2) of Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988.

2. Case of the prosecution, in brief, is that a complaint was submitted by Santosh Kumar Malik before the Economic Offences Investigation Bureau/Anti-Corruption Bureau, Raipur, alleging that during the period from January, 2001 to December, 2007, certain muster rolls and payment vouchers submitted from the Forest Range, Baikunthpur, contained forged thumb impressions and signatures of labourers and were allegedly submitted without proper dispatch through the office. On the basis of the said complaint, the disputed thumb impressions and signatures were examined by the Finger Print Branch, Raipur. Out of 37 disputed thumb impressions, 12 were allegedly found not matching with the specimen thumb impressions of the concerned labourers. As per report the present applicant, who was posted as Forest Range Officer, along with co-accused Ram Bahadur Singh, the then Forest Guard, failed to properly discharge their official duties and, pursuant to an alleged conspiracy, forged thumb impressions/signatures of labourers in the muster rolls and payment vouchers and prepared forged documents thereby, an amount of Rs.6,414.85 of Government money was allegedly withdrawn and misappropriated. After completion of investigation, the charge-sheet has been filed against the present applicant before the competent Court. Applicant apprehends his arrest in connection with the aforementioned crime number.

3. Learned counsel for the applicant submits that FIR is registered in the year 2010 for the alleged incident of forge payment of wages to daily wage employees. The applicant at that time was in service and based on the same allegation he was subjected to departmental enquiry in which applicant was exonerated from the charges levelled against him. Applicant retired from the service in the year 2013 and now he is aged about 74 years. Applicant will cooperate in investigation and also cooperate in trial. He also submits that there is no any other criminal antecedent against the applicant, therefore the benefit of anticipatory bail may be extended to him.

4. Learned State counsel opposes the submission of learned counsel for applicant and submits that there is allegation of misappropriation of Rs.6,414.85. However, he do not dispute the submission of learned counsel for the applicant with regard to the incident of the year 2003 and named FIR was registered in the year 2010. He contended that based on the report, crime is registered. There is prima facie allegation against the applicant.

5. I have heard learned counsel for the respective parties and also perused the documents enclosed along with bail application.

6. On due consideration of the facts and circumstances of the case, nature of allegation, submission of learned counsel for the parties, further considering in particular as mentioned in the FIR the incident of the year 2003 and named FIR was registered in the year 2010, as stated by counsel for applicant that applicant was

exonerated in the departmental enquiry and he is aged about 74 years, without commenting anything on merits, I am inclined to allow this anticipatory bail application.

7. Accordingly, application is allowed and it is directed that in the event of arrest of applicant in connection with the aforementioned crime number, he shall be released on anticipatory bail by the Officer arresting him on his executing a personal bond in the sum of ₹25,000/- with one surety in the like sum to the satisfaction of the concerned arresting Officer. Applicant shall also abide by the following conditions:

(i) that the applicant shall make himself available for interrogation before the Investigation Officer as and when required;

(ii) that the applicant shall not, directly or indirectly, make any inducement, threat or promise to any person acquainted with the facts of the case so as to dissuade him/her from disclosing such facts to the Court or to any police officer;

(iii) that the applicant shall not act, in any manner, which will be prejudicial to fair and expeditious trial; and

(iv) that the applicant shall appear before the trial Court on each and every date given to him by the said Court till disposal of the trial.

Certified copy as per rules.

Sd/-

(Parth Prateem Sahu)

JUDGE

Ravi Mandavi