IN THE HIGH COURT OF HIMACHAL PRADESH AT SHIMLA

Cr. MP (M) No. 620 of 2026 a/w
Cr.MP(M) No.621 of 2026
Date of Decision:24.04.2026

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1. Cr.MP (M) No.620 of 2026

Vikrant ...Petitioner

Versus

State of Himachal Pradesh …Respondent

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2. Cr.MP (M) No.621 of 2026

Rajesh Kumar ...Petitioner

Versus

State of Himachal Pradesh …Respondent

Coram:
The Hon'ble Mr. Justice Sandeep Sharma, Judge.
Whether approved for reporting?[1] .

For the Petitioner(s): Mr. Munish Datwalia, Advocate.

For the Respondent(s): Mr. Rajan Kahol & Mr. Vishal Panwar, Additional Advocate Generals with Mr. Ravi Chauhan, Deputy Advocate General for the respondent-State.

Sandeep Sharma, J. (Oral)

Since both the petitions arise out of the same FIR, they were taken up together for hearing and are being disposed of vide this common order.

2. Sequel to order(s) dated 17.04.2026, whereby bail petitioners were ordered to be enlarged on interim bail in the event of their arrest in case FIR No. 58 of 2026, dated 25.03.2026, under

[1] Whether reporters of the local papers may be allowed to see the judgment?

Sections 108 and 3(5) of Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita, registered at Police Station, Sadar Kullu, District Kullu, Himachal Pradesh, respondent-State has filed status report and SI/IO Bhoop Singh has come present with record. Record perused and returned.

3. Close scrutiny of the record/status report reveals that in terms of afore order(s), both the petitioners have already joined the investigation and nothing remains to be recovered from them. Mr. Rajan Kahol, learned Additional Advocate General, on instructions of the Investigating Officer, states that though nothing remains to be recovered from the bail petitioners, but keeping in view the gravity of the offence alleged to have been committed by them, they do not deserve any leniency. He states that there is overwhelming evidence adduced on record suggestive of the fact that deceased Kritika committed suicide after her being mentally harassed and tortured by both the petitioners.

4. Having heard learned counsel for the parties and perused material adduced on record, this Court finds that FIR, as detailed hereinabove, came to be lodged on 25.03.2026, on the basis of statement made by Smt. Bhagi Devi, mother of the deceased, who alleged that for the last 5-6 months, her deceased daughter was staying with them for the reason that she was constantly harassed and tortured by her husband and father-in-law at her matrimonial house. She alleged that on 25.03.2026, father-

in-law of her daughter, Rajesh Kumar telephonically asked her to send deceased Kritika. She alleged that at around 3.00 PM, while she was going to her parental house, her deceased daughter telephonically informed her that she is going for tailoring, but when she came back, her room was found locked from inside. She alleged that once victim/prosecutrix did not open the door, she alongwith her husband, opened the door with force and found that their daughter deceased Kritika had hanged herself. She alleged that her daughter committed suicide after being tortured and harassed by her husband and father-in-law. In aforesaid background, FIR came to be lodged against the petitioners, who happen to be deceased husband and father-in-law.

5. Since it is not in dispute that for the last 5-6 months, deceased was staying with her parents and unfortunate incident of suicide, also came to be happened at her parental house, this Court is perused to agree with learned counsel for the petitioners that there is no evidence suggestive of the fact that deceased committed suicide, after being harassed and tortured by the petitioners.

6. Though, learned Additional Advocate General, while making this Court peruse the record, attempted to argue that on the date of alleged incident, approximately 80 calls were made by the husband of the deceased, but such fact, if any, may not be

sufficient to conclude guilt of the accused, especially taking note of the fact that day prior of the alleged incident, father-in-law of the deceased had called her mother to send her back. There is nothing on record that within span of 5-6 months during which deceased was staying at her parental house, complaint, if any, was ever made to the police or Gram Panchayat concerned with regard to constant torture and harassment by the petitioner.

7. Though, the case at hand shall be decided by the court below in totality of evidence collected on record by the prosecution, but taking note of aforesaid glaring aspect of the matter, coupled with the fact that bail petitioners have already joined the investigation, this Court sees no reason to let the bail petitioners incarcerate in jail for indefinite period during trial.

8. By now it is well settled that freedom of an individual is of utmost importance and cannot be curtailed for indefinite period. Till the time guilt of accused is not proved, in accordance with law, he is deemed to be innocent. In the case at hand, the guilt, if any, of the bail petitioners is yet to be proved, in accordance with law.

9. Recently, the Hon'ble Apex Court in Criminal Appeal No. 227/2018, **Dataram Singh** vs. **State of Uttar Pradesh & Anr** decided on 6.2.2018 has categorically held that freedom of an individual is of utmost importance and same cannot be curtailed merely on the basis of suspicion. Hon’ble Apex Court has further

held that till the time guilt of accused is not proved, in accordance with law, he is deemed to be innocent. The relevant paras No.2 to 5 of the judgment are reproduced as under:-

> ***2. A fundamental postulate of criminal jurisprudence is the presumption of innocence, meaning thereby that a person is believed to be innocent until found guilty. However, there are instances in our criminal law where a reverse onus has been placed on an accused with regard to some specific offences but that is another matter and does not detract from the fundamental postulate in respect of other offences. Yet another important facet of our criminal jurisprudence is that the grant of bail is the general rule and putting a person in jail or in a prison or in a correction home (whichever expression one may wish to use) is an exception. Unfortunately, some of these basic principles appear to have been lost sight of with the result that more and more persons are being incarcerated and for longer periods. This does not do any good to our criminal jurisprudence or to our society.***
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> ***3. There is no doubt that the grant or denial of bail is entirely the discretion of the judge considering a case but even so, the exercise of judicial discretion has been circumscribed by a large number of decisions rendered by this Court and by every High Court in the country. Yet, occasionally there is a necessity to introspect whether denying bail to an accused person is the right thing to do on the facts and in the circumstances of a case.***
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> ***4. While so introspecting, among the factors that need to be considered is whether the accused was arrested during investigations when that person perhaps has the best opportunity to tamper with the evidence or influence witnesses. If the investigating officer does not find it necessary to arrest an accused person during investigations, a strong case should be made out for placing that person in judicial custody after a charge sheet is filed. Similarly, it is important to ascertain whether the accused was participating in the investigations to the satisfaction of the investigating officer and was not absconding or not appearing when required by the investigating officer. Surely, if an accused is not hiding from the investigating officer or is hiding due to some genuine and expressed fear of being victimised, it would be a factor that a judge would need to consider in an appropriate case. It is also necessary for the judge to consider whether the accused is a first-time offender or has been accused***

> ***of other offences and if so, the nature of such offences and his or her general conduct. The poverty or the deemed indigent status of an accused is also an extremely important factor and even Parliament has taken notice of it by incorporating an Explanation to Section 436 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973. An equally soft approach to incarceration has been taken by Parliament by inserting Section 436A in the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973.***
> ***5. To put it shortly, a humane attitude is required to be adopted by a judge, while dealing with an application for remanding a suspect or an accused person to police custody or judicial custody. There are several reasons for this including maintaining the dignity of an accused person, howsoever poor that person might be, the requirements of Article 21 of the Constitution and the fact that there is enormous overcrowding in prisons, leading to social and other problems as noticed by this Court in In Re-Inhuman Conditions in 1382 Prisons***

10. Needless to say object of the bail is to secure the attendance of the accused in the trial and the proper test to be applied in the solution of the question whether bail should be granted or refused is whether it is probable that the party will appear to take his trial. Otherwise, bail is not to be withheld as a punishment. Otherwise also, normal rule is of bail and not jail. Court has to keep in mind nature of accusations, nature of evidence in support thereof, severity of the punishment which conviction will entail, character of the accused, circumstances which are peculiar to the accused involved in that crime.

11. The Hon'ble Apex Court in ***Sanjay Chandra versus Central Bureau of Investigation*** (2012)1 Supreme Court Cases 49; held as under:-

> ***" The object of bail is to secure the appearance of the accused person at his trial by reasonable amount***

> ***of bail. The object of bail is neither punitive nor preventative. Deprivation of liberty must be considered a punishment, unless it can be required to ensure that an accused person will stand his trial when called upon. The Courts owe more than verbal respect to the principle that punishment begins after conviction, and that every man is deemed to be innocent until duly tried and duly found guilty. Detention in custody pending completion of trial could be a cause of great hardship. From time to time, necessity demands that some unconvicted persons should be held in custody pending trial to secure their attendance at the trial but in such cases, "necessity" is the operative test. In India , it would be quite contrary to the concept of personal liberty enshrined in the Constitution that any person should be punished in respect of any matter, upon which, he has not been convicted or that in any circumstances, he should be deprived of his liberty upon only the belief that he will tamper with the witnesses if left at liberty, save in the most extraordinary circumstances. Apart from the question of prevention being the object of refusal of bail, one must not lose sight of the fact that any imprisonment before conviction has a substantial punitive content and it would be improper for any court to refuse bail as a mark of disapproval of former conduct whether the accused has been convicted for it or not or to refuse bail to an unconvicted person for the propose of giving him a taste of imprisonment as a lesson."***

12. The Hon'ble Apex Court in ***Prasanta Kumar Sarkar v. Ashis Chatterjee and Another*** (2010) 14 SCC 496, has laid down the following principles to be kept in mind, while deciding petition for bail:

> ***(i) whether there is any prima facie or reasonable ground to believe that the accused had committed the offence;***
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> ***(ii) nature and gravity of the accusation;***
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> ***(iii) severity of the punishment in the event of conviction;***
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> ***(iv) danger of the accused absconding or fleeing, if released on bail;***
>
> ***(v) character, behaviour, means, position and standing of the accused;***

(vi) likelihood of the offence being repeated;

(vii) reasonable apprehension of the witnesses being influenced; and

(viii) danger, of course, of justice being thwarted by grant of bail.

13. Consequently, in view of the above, order(s) dated 17.04.2026 passed by this Court, is made absolute, subject to the petitioners' furnishing personal bonds in the sum of Rs. 1,00,000/- with two local sureties in the like amount each, to the satisfaction of learned trial Court, besides the following conditions:

a. they shall make themselves available for the purpose of interrogation, if so required and regularly attend the trial Court on each and every date of hearing and if prevented by any reason to do so, seek exemption from appearance by filing appropriate application;

b. they shall not tamper with the prosecution evidence nor hamper the investigation of the case in any manner whatsoever;

c. they shall not make any inducement, threat or promises to any person acquainted with the facts of the case so as to dissuade him from disclosing such facts to the Court or the Police Officer; and

d. they shall not leave the territory of India without the prior permission of the Court.

14. It is clarified that if the petitioners misuse their liberty or violate any of the conditions imposed upon them, the investigating agency shall be free to move this Court for cancellation of the bail.

15. Any observations made hereinabove shall not be construed to be a reflection on the merits of the case and shall remain confined to the disposal of these applications alone.

The bail petitions stand disposed of accordingly.

(Sandeep Sharma)
Judge

April 24,2026
(shankar)