



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

217-III

CRM-M-6627-2026 (O&M)
Date of decision : 19.05.2026

Ankit Surendra Jha

..... Petitioner

VERSUS

State of U.T. Chandigarh

..... Respondent

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE SURYA PARTAP SINGH

Present : Mr. Raman Sihag and Mr. Tejas Ahlawat, Advocates
for the petitioner.

Mr. Manish Bansal, P.P., U.T. Chandigarh with
Mr. Dixit Bhardwaj and Ms. Sarasmi Budhiraja, Advocates
assisted by SI Kulwinder.

SURYA PARTAP SINGH, J.

This petition for bail is the first petition, filed by the petitioner under Section 483 of 'the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023'. It has been filed with regard to a case arising out of FIR No.35 dated 17.04.2025, for the commission of offence punishable under Sections 318(4), 319(2), 336(3), 338, 340(2), 61(2) of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, Police Station Cyber Crime, U.T. Chandigarh.

2. The abovementioned FIR came into being at the instance of 'Manish Aggarwal, hereinafter being referred to as 'complainant' only. It was stated by the above-named complainant that on 05.10.2023, he saw a notification in the newspaper with regard to opening of a 'Toyota' dealership. As per complainant, he downloaded the form from the link given



in the abovementioned notification and sent the duly filled application Form, on the given address.

3. According to complainant, after two-and-a-half months, he received a call and the caller told him that the application for dealership filed by the complainant had been received. It was further stated by the complainant that during conversation, the details of information etc. were collected from him and thereafter, a Zoom meeting was arranged and he was asked to deposit the money. According to complainant, in view of abovementioned instructions, under the impression that he would be allotted dealership of 'Toyota' car, he paid Rs.54 lacs through bank transactions in two different bank accounts. As per complainant, later on he came to know that he had fallen prey to fraudsters involved in the cybercrime.

4. It is the case of the prosecution that pursuant to abovementioned complaint, formal FIR of this case was lodged and the investigation taken up. According to prosecution, during the course of investigation, accused 'Mubarak Ali Gafar Ali Shah' has been arrested, who on interrogation suffered a disclosure statement and pursuant to abovesaid disclosure statement, the present petitioner was arrested.

5. The learned State Counsel has filed custody certificate of the petitioner. The same be taken on record.

6. Heard.

7. It has been contended by learned counsel for the petitioner that the petitioner is innocent having no nexus, whatsoever, with the commission of crime, and that he has been arrested in the present case, merely, on the



basis of disclosure statement of co-accused of the petitioner, which is inadmissible in evidence, as the same was recorded, when co-accused of the petitioner is in police custody. According to learned counsel for the petitioner, the offence is triable by the Court of Judicial Magistrate, and that the petitioner has already suffered incarceration for a period of more than six months. As per learned counsel for the petitioner, nothing has been left to be recovered from the possession of petitioner, and that the trial is not likely to be concluded in near future, and therefore, the petitioner is entitled for the benefit of bail.

8. The learned State Counsel has controverted the abovementioned arguments. According to learned State Counsel, in the present case, there is direct link between the petitioner and the beneficiary of the crime, and that the abovementioned link shows that the petitioner was member of the gang, which was involved in committing fraud with the complainant. As per learned counsel for the petitioner, the documents and evidence on record collectively establishes that the petitioner has an active role in the procurement, layering and concealment of cyber fraud proceeds.

9. The record has been perused carefully.

10. A perusal of record shows that in the present case, following are the relevant factors which are required to be taken into consideration for a decision:-

- i. that the offence is triable by the Court of Judicial Magistrate;



- ii. that the maximum punishment prescribed for the commission of abovementioned offence is imprisonment up to seven years;
- iv. that the petitioner is already in custody for a period of more than six months;
- v. that the petitioner has no criminal antecedents;
- vi. that the only evidence, collected by the investigating agency against the petitioner is the disclosure statement of co-accused of the petitioner, and there is a question mark with regard to credibility & admissibility of above-mentioned statement in evidence, as the same was recorded when the co-accused was in police custody. Since pursuant to above-mentioned disclosure statement recovery of any incriminating material or discovery of fact has not taken place, *prima facie* the abovementioned statement appears to be hit by Section-23 of Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam;
- vii. that nothing has been left to be recovered from possession of petitioner;
- viii. that the trial is not likely to be concluded in near future;
- ix. that the detention of petitioner in judicial lock up is not likely to serve any purpose;
- x. that there is nothing on record to show that if released on bail, the petitioner may tamper with the evidence or influence the witnesses; and
- xi. that there is nothing on record to show that if released on bail, the petitioner will not co-operate/participate in trial.

11. In the present case, the principles of law laid down by the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in the case of "Dataram versus State of



Uttar Pradesh and another”, 2018(2) R.C.R. (Criminal) 131, are also relevant, wherein it has been observed that “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. 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”.

12. The principles laid down by the Hon’ble the Supreme Court of India in the case of ‘Satender Kumar Antil Vs. Central Bureau of Investigation and Another’, (2022) 10 SCC 51, are also relevant in this case. In the abovementioned case, it has been observed that “the rate of conviction in criminal cases in India is abysmally low. It appears to us that this factor



weighs on the mind of the Court while deciding the bail applications in a negative sense. Courts tend to think that the possibility of a conviction being nearer to rarity, bail applications will have to be decided strictly, contrary to legal principles. We cannot mix up consideration of a bail application, which is not punitive in nature with that of a possible adjudication by way of trial. On the contrary, an ultimate acquittal with continued custody would be a case of grave injustice”.

13. Recently, in the case of ‘Tapas Kumar Palit Vs. State of Chhattisgarh’, 2025 SCC Online SC 322, the Hon’ble Supreme Court of India has observed that “if an accused is to get a final verdict after incarceration of six to seven years in jail as an undertrial prisoner, then, definitely, it could be said that his right to have a speedy trial under Article 21 of the Constitution has been infringed”. It has also been observed by the Hon’ble Supreme Court of India in the abovementioned case that “delays are bad for the accused and extremely bad for the victims, for Indian society and for the credibility of our justice system, which is valued. Judges are the masters of their Courtrooms and the Criminal Procedure Code provides many tools for the Judges to use in order to ensure that cases proceed efficiently”.

14. To elucidate further, this Court is conscious of the basic and fundamental principle of law that right to speedy trial is a part of reasonable, fair and just procedure enshrined under Article 21 of the Constitution of India. This constitutional right cannot be denied to the accused as mandated



by Hon’ble Apex court in “Balwinder Singh versus State of Punjab and Another”, 2024 SCC Online SC 4354.

15. If the cumulative effect of all the abovementioned factors, involved in the instant case, is taken into consideration, it leads to a conclusion that the petitioner is entitled for the benefit of bail, and that the present petition deserves to be allowed.

16. Accordingly, without commenting anything on the merits of the case, the present petition is hereby *allowed*. The petitioner is hereby ordered to be released on bail on furnishing personal bond and surety bond(s) to the satisfaction of learned trial Court. However the abovementioned concession shall be subject to following conditions:-

- (i) that the petitioner 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 to disclose such facts to the Court or to any other authority;
- (ii) that the petitioner shall at the time of execution of bond, furnish the address to the Court concerned and shall notify the change in address to the trial Court, till the final decision of the trial; and
- (iii) that the petitioner shall not leave India without prior permission of the trial Court.

(SURYA PARTAP SINGH)
JUDGE

19.05.2026
Gaurav Thakur

Whether speaking / reasoned	Yes/No
Whether Reportable	Yes/No