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IN THE HIGH COURT FOR THE STATES OF PUNJAB AND
HARYANA AT CHANDIGARH

CRM-M-15934-2026 (O&M)

Amarjit Singh

...Petitioner

Versus

State of Punjab

...Respondent

Sr. No.	Particulars	Details
1	The date when the judgment is reserved	07.04.2026
2	The date when the judgment is pronounced	08.04.2026
3	The date when the judgment is uploaded on the website	08.04.2026
4	Whether only operative part of the judgment is pronounced or full judgment is pronounced	Full
5	The delay, if any, of the pronouncement of full judgment, and reasons thereof	Not applicable

CORAM: HON'BLE MRS. JUSTICE MANISHA BATRA

Present:- Ms. Tanu Bedi, Advocate (through VC) and
Mr. Pushp Jain, Advocate
for the petitioner.

Mr. P. I. P. Singh, Addl. A.G., Punjab with
Mr. Durgesh Garg, AAG, Punjab.

Mr. Pradeep Virk, Senior Advocate with
Mr. Ajay Sharma, Advocate and
Mr. Amandeep Punia, Advocate
for the complainant.

MANISHA BATRA, J.

1. Prayer in this petition, filed under Section 482 of Bharatiya
Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 (*for short 'BNSS'*), is for grant of anticipatory
bail to the petitioner in case bearing FIR No.168 dated 07.12.2025, registered
under Sections 295, 295-A, 408, 409, 465 and 120-B of IPC and Section 5 of
Jagat Jot Shri Guru Granth Sahib Satkar Act, 2008 (Sections 466, 467, 468 and

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471 of IPC added later on) at Police Station Division-C, District Police Commissionerate Amritsar.

2. Brief facts of the case relevant for the purpose of disposal of this petition are that the abovementioned FIR has been registered at the instance of complainant Baldev Singh, representative of 'Sikh Sadbhavna Dal', alleging therein that 328 sacred saroops (holy books) of 'Shri Guru Granth Sahib Ji', which were in the custody of 'Shriomani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee', Sri Amritsar Sahib, were found missing in 2016. It is alleged that the petitioner in connivance with other accused persons was involved in unauthorized printing, distribution, disappearance and mishandling of sacred saroops, misappropriation and commission of a fraud, worth Rs.9,82,700/-, with the institution. It has also been alleged that evidence pertaining to abovementioned acts has been destroyed and the religious sentiments of Sikh community have been hurt. The abovesaid allegations are based upon the report of the fact-finding/inquiry Committee constituted by the Shriomani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee (*for short* 'SGPC'), Sri Amritsar Sahib. After registration of the FIR, investigation proceedings have been initiated. During the course of investigation, it was found that the petitioner was working as Sewadar with the SGPC. He did not maintain the record of the destructed/cremated holy scriptures of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji with a mala fide intention. Apprehending his arrest, the petitioner had filed an application seeking concession of anticipatory bail before the Court of learned Additional Sessions Judge, Amritsar but the same had been dismissed, vide order dated 19.01.2026.

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3. It has been argued by learned counsel for the petitioner that he has been falsely implicated in this case. He was running a private school. He was not connected to SGPC in any manner and was only performing occasional and voluntary services at Goindwal Sahib. He had volunteered to deliver a status report to Ishar Singh Inquiry Committee only because Bhai Narinder Singh had passed away and the regular Sewadar was not available at that time and only due to that reason, he cannot be termed as official 'Sewadar'. Since he was not holding any official post, the allegations levelled against him that he failed to record the damaged scriptures in the year 2016 are baseless and have no sanctity. The petitioner has been made a scapegoat due to the connivance and illegal acts of certain higher officials in a case relating to the alleged misappropriation of saroops of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. The petitioner has no concern whatsoever with the alleged misappropriation, which is stated to have occurred during the period from the year 2011 to 2016, when the petitioner had no connection of any kind with the Printing Department.

4. It is further argued by learned counsel for the petitioner that a bare perusal of the FIR reveals that it is vague, devoid of particulars and does not attribute any specific role to the petitioner. Moreover, the SGPC itself has never alleged that the petitioner committed any offence as mentioned in the FIR. An earlier complaint filed by Balwinder Singh, General Secretary of the same association, under Section 156(3) Cr.P.C. seeking registration of FIR on identical allegations, had already been dismissed by the learned Judicial Magistrate First Class, Amritsar, vide a detailed order dated 08.04.2021. There is inordinate and unexplained delay in registration of the FIR. The petitioner

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has clean antecedents and is not involved in any other case. He is in Canada since August, 2025 i.e. even before registration of the present FIR. He is ready to join the investigation by returning to India. His custodial interrogation is not required. No recovery is to be effected from him. No useful purpose would be served by detaining him in custody. Co-accused Gurmukh Singh, Baj Singh and Manjit Singh, against whom there are even graver allegations, have been granted concession of interim anticipatory bail by this Court. On parity, the petitioner too deserves to be given the same benefit. Hence, it is urged that the petition deserves to be allowed.

5. *Per contra*, learned State Counsel, assisted by learned Senior counsel for the complainant, has argued that the present case involves serious allegations of forgery, fabrication, tampering with evidence, destruction of official records of SGPC and sacrilege/disrespect of Shri Guru Granth Sahib Ji by senior officials and sewadars including the petitioner since 2013-14. Reference is made to an incident dated 19.05.2016 at Gurudwara Ramsar, Amritsar, where approximately 80 saroops were allegedly damaged in a fire. Learned State counsel submits that an inquiry conducted by SGPC culminated in a report dated 23.10.2018, which revealed large-scale forgery of records, bills, ledgers, and vouchers, along with destruction of records and fabrication of evidence by officials and senior management. However, no action was taken against the persons involved, indicating a nexus between the culprits and higher authorities. A High-Level Inquiry Commission was constituted by SGPC in July, 2020, which submitted its report on 23.08.2020. The Commission found that 328 saroops of Shri Guru Granth Sahib Ji were unaccounted for and were under the control of the co-accused and the

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petitioner, and recommended legal action. The petitioner was serving as Sewadar in with the SGPC but he failed to maintain the record of the destructed/cremated holy scriptures of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji with a mala fide intention. In February, 2020, 61 scriptures were prepared in an unauthorized manner from additional parts. He had failed to perform his duties intentionally. The petitioner acted in collusion with co-accused in commission of the offences. His custodial interrogation is required for conducting proper investigation in the matter. It is, therefore, urged that the petition is liable to be dismissed.

6. This Court has heard the rival submissions.

7. As per the allegations, 328 saroops of Shri Guru Granth Sahib Ji were accounted for during this period and the same were under the control of the co-accused and the petitioner. The petitioner has been nominated as accused on the allegations that he was working as Sewadar with the SGPC but he, in connivance with the co-accused, did not maintain the record of the destructed/damaged scriptures. However, the petitioner has taken a candid stand that he was not an official Sewadar and had only performed as such occasionally and voluntarily in the absence of regular/official Sewadar. This disputed question of fact can only be decided after appreciating the evidence to be produced on record during trial and no conclusive inference can be drawn at this stage. However, on a perusal of the record, it is apparent that the allegations do not *prima facie* indicate that he was involved in any act of misappropriation or that he committed any form of disrespect to holy saroops of Shri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. Rather, the allegations are confined only to the negligence and not to any act of misappropriation or criminal intent. It also

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emerges that the alleged incidents pertain to the period from 2011 to 2016, whereas the FIR in question has been registered only on 07.12.2025, after an inordinate delay, for which no plausible explanation has been furnished. Another significant aspect is that the FIR has not been lodged by the SGPC itself, which is the competent body entrusted with the management of religious affairs but rather at the instance of a third party, despite the matter having remained within the knowledge of the SGPC for a considerable period of time. It is also apparent that the evidence sought to be collected by the Investigating Agency is largely documentary in nature and, therefore, custodial interrogation of the petitioner does not appear to be necessary. In any case, if any further inquiry is required from the petitioner, the same can be effectively carried out by directing him to join and cooperate with the investigation as and when called upon to do so.

8. It is further noteworthy that there is nothing on record to suggest that in the event of being granted anticipatory bail, the petitioner would either tamper with the evidence or influence any witness. The petitioner is stated to have clean antecedents and has expressed his willingness to join the investigation. Moreso, the abovenamed co-accused, against there were even graver allegations, have already been granted concession of anticipatory bail by this Court. The principle of parity also weighs in favour of the petitioner. In view of the aforesaid facts and circumstances, this Court is of the considered opinion that the petitioner has made out a case for grant of anticipatory bail. Consequently, the present petition is allowed. The petitioner is directed to join the investigation within a period of 30 days from today by appearing before the Investigating Officer or as and when called upon to do so and in the event of

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arrest, he shall be released on anticipatory bail subject to furnishing adequate personal/surety bonds to the satisfaction of the Arresting/Investigating Officer and subject to the conditions as envisaged under Section 482(2) of the BNSS.

9. It is made clear that the observations made hereinabove are only for the purpose of deciding the present petition and the same shall not be construed as an expression of opinion on the merits of the case.

08.04.2026
Waseem Ansari

(MANISHA BATRA)
JUDGE

Whether speaking/reasoned
Whether reportable

Yes/No
Yes/No