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**IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA AT
CHANDIGARH****CRM-M-17017-2026**

Puja Singh

....Petitioner

Versus

State of Punjab

....Respondent

Date of Decision: April 27, 2026**Date of Uploading: April 27, 2026****CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE SUMEET GOEL****Present:** Mr. Ashwani Arora, Advocate for the petitioner.

Mr. Adhiraj Singh, AAG, Punjab.

SUMEET GOEL, J. (Oral)

Present petition has been filed under Section 482 of Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 (hereinafter to be referred as 'the BNSS') for grant of pre-arrest/anticipatory bail to the petitioner, in case bearing FIR No.134 dated 11.12.2024 registered under Sections 420 and 406 IPC, at Police Station City Batala, District Gurdaspur.

2. The gravamen of the instant FIR reflects that it has been registered on the basis of a complaint moved by the complainant—Ranjit Singh. In his complaint, the complainant has stated that he was running a visa consultancy business and came into contact with petitioner (herein) and co-accused Rahul Singh, who represented themselves as running a human resource consultancy firm in Dubai. The complainant has alleged that they induced him to arrange candidates for overseas employment in Poland and Romania and demanded advance payments. The complainant further alleged that a substantial amount was paid partly in cash and partly deposited in the joint bank account of the petitioner and her husband. It is

further alleged that fake offer letters and appointment documents were provided to the candidates, who later discovered at the embassies that the same were forged. He has further alleged that upon demanding the money in question, the accused allegedly threatened him. During inquiry, it has come on record that an amount of ₹8,94,000/- was deposited in the joint account of the petitioner and her husband. Upon these set of allegations, the instant FIR came to be registered.

3. Learned counsel for the petitioner has iterated that a bare perusal of the FIR itself shows that allegations leveled against the petitioner are concocted, improbable and devoid of any merit. Learned counsel for the petitioner contends that the petitioner has been falsely implicated into the FIR in question. It is contended that the petitioner is neither involved in any consultancy business nor a beneficiary of the alleged transactions. The entire business dealings were carried out by her husband and the complainant, and the petitioner has no direct or indirect role in the alleged offence. He has further argued that the petitioner is a lady aged 47 years with clean antecedents.

3.1. Learned counsel asserts that the custodial interrogation should not be used as a punitive measure and is justified only when absolutely necessary for the recovery of material evidence. Learned counsel has argued that nothing is to be recovered from the petitioner. Furthermore, the petitioner is ready to join the investigation and hence no useful purpose would be served by sending her behind the bars. On the aforesaid submissions, the grant of anticipatory bail is entreated for.

4. *Per contra*, learned State counsel has opposed the grant of anticipatory bail to the petitioner by arguing that the allegations against the petitioner is serious in nature, involving cheating of a substantial amount.

Learned State counsel has argued that the amount in question has been credited into the joint account of the petitioner and her husband. Given the severity of the offence, there exists a substantial likelihood that the petitioner may abscond or tamper with the evidence, if she is enlarged on bail. On the strength of these submissions, dismissal of the petition in hand is entreated for.

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 in the FIR in question, the allegations against the petitioner are grave and specific. The allegations disclose a well-planned scheme of cheating, wherein candidates were lured on the pretext of overseas employment and fake documents/appointment letters were allegedly issued. As per the case set up by the prosecution, a substantial amount was deposited in the joint bank account of the petitioner and her husband. The contention raised by learned counsel that the petitioner has no role in the transactions in question, cannot be accepted at this stage, in view of the specific allegations regarding receipt of money in her account.

No cause *nay* plausible cause has been shown, at this stage, from which it can be deciphered that the petitioner has been falsely implicated into the present FIR.

7. 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 interests. 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 the deeper and wide impact of such alleged iniquities on the society. It is imperative that every person in the Society can expect an atmosphere free from foreboding & fear

of any transgression. 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 appears to establish a reasonable basis for the accusations. Thus, it is not appropriate to grant anticipatory bail to the petitioner, as it would necessarily cause impediment in effective investigation. In *State v. Anil Sharma, (1997) 7 SCC 187: 1997 SCC (Cri) 1039J*, the Supreme Court held as under : (SCC p. 189, para 6)

“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.”

8. In view of the seriousness of the allegations, this Court finds no compelling ground to extend the benefit of discretionary relief to the petitioner. Moreover, custodial interrogation of the petitioner is necessary for an effective investigation & to unravel the truth. The petition is, thus, devoid of merits and is hereby **dismissed**.

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

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

(SUMEET GOEL)
JUDGE

April 27, 2026

Naveen

Whether speaking/reasoned: Yes/No

Whether reportable: Yes/No