



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

Sr.No.217

**CRM-M-22595-2026
Decided on : 07.05.2026**

Mahender @ Maninder Jangra

..... Petitioner

Versus

State of Haryana

..... Respondent

CORAM : HON'BLE MS. JUSTICE RUPINDERJIT CHAHAL

Present : Mr. Vinod Ghai, Senior Advocate with
Mr. Arnav Ghai and Mr. Jeevanjot S.Kang, Advocates
for the petitioner.

Mr. Mohit Chaudhary, AAG, Haryana
for the respondent-State.

RUPINDERJIT CHAHAL, J (ORAL)

1. Prayer in the present petition filed under Section 482 of the BNSS, 2023 is for grant of anticipatory bail to the petitioner in case FIR No.75 dated 16.03.2026, registered under Sections 316(2), 318(4) of BNS, at Police Station Taraori, District Karnal.

2. Brief facts, as per the prosecution case, are that a complaint was received from Paddy Incharge, Food and Supply and Consumer Affairs, P.R. Centre Taraori against M/s Vishvakarma Overseas (petitioner being the proprietor) that it was allotted 39872.25 quintal paddy by the department but during physical verification 26922.5 quintal paddy was found less whose estimated cost is approximately Rs.7 crores.



3. Learned counsel for the petitioner submits that the petitioner has been falsely implicated in the present case and he is completely innocent. He further contends that the allegations levelled against him are false, fabricated and based on a manipulated verification report and he has no concern with the said offence. Learned counsel contends that the verification was conducted in the absence of the petitioner or his representatives which is inherently unreliable. He further contends that even the complaint itself admits the possibility of theft due to lack of boundary wall. No recovery is to be effected from the petitioner, and his custodial interrogation is not required. Learned counsel also submits that the petitioner is ready and willing to join the investigation as and when called upon to do so by the Investigating Agency and shall fully cooperate with the investigation. On these grounds, it is prayed that the present petition be allowed.

4. On the other hand, learned State counsel has filed the status report, which is taken on record. He while referring to the said status report has opposed the prayer for grant of anticipatory bail by submitting that the allegations levelled against the petitioner are serious in nature. He contends that the petitioner being the proprietor of M/s Vishvakarma Overseas was allotted 39,872.25 quintals of paddy, of which 67% was to be returned to the department as rice and the petitioner failed to do so, pursuant to which a physical verification was conducted. During the verification conducted by a senior officer of the Food and Supply Department with proper videography, 26,922.5 quintals of paddy amounting to Rs.7 crores approximately was found missing. Learned State counsel contends that the petitioner has defrauded the government causing a loss of approximately Rs.7 crores to



the State exchequer. He submits that the relevant documents are yet to be recovered from the petitioner and further the involvement of other accused is yet to be ascertained and the embezzled paddy is yet to be recovered. Thus, the petitioner does not deserve any concession from this Court.

5. Having heard learned counsel for the parties at length and after perusing the record, it is evident that the allegations levelled against the petitioner are serious in nature. The petitioner, being the proprietor of M/s Vishvakarma Overseas was allotted 39,872.25 quintals of paddy, of which 67% was to be returned to the department as rice which the petitioner failed to do, pursuant to which a physical verification was conducted by a Senior Officer of the Food and Supply Department. During the verification, 26,922.5 quintals of paddy amounting to Rs.7 crores approximately was found missing. The petitioner has defrauded the government causing a loss of approximately Rs.7 crores to the State exchequer; the relevant documents are yet to be recovered from the petitioner; further the involvement of other accused is yet to be ascertained; the embezzled paddy is yet to be recovered. The investigation prima facie indicates involvement of petitioner in the crime. This Court is sanguine of the fact that while considering the petition for anticipatory bail, it is required to consider the overall nature of offence and accusation against the accused, the manner of occurrence, the gravity of offence and the potential impact of granting pre-arrest protection, at this stage. Granting anticipatory bail with such allegations, at this preliminary stage, would not be justified as it may affect the course of fair investigation and undermine and seriousness of the alleged act. Considering the gravity of the allegations, the custodial interrogation of the petitioner is necessary for effective investigation in the matter.



6. 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 interest(s). 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 would be apposite to refer herein judgment of Hon'ble Supreme Court in '**State Vs. Anil Sharma**', (1997) 7 SCC 187, wherein it has been held as under:

"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 information 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."

7. The Hon'ble Supreme Court, in case titled as "**P. Chidambaram v. Directorate of Enforcement**", (2019) 9 SCC 24, while dealing with economic offences, has held that the power of anticipatory bail should be sparingly exercised in economic offences. The relevant portion of the judgment is reproduced as under:-



"77. After referring to Siddharam Satlingappa Mhetre and other judgments and observing that anticipatory bail can be granted only in exceptional circumstances, in Jai Prakash Singh v. State of Bihar, the Supreme Court held as under: (SCC p.386, para 19)

"19. Parameters for grant of anticipatory bail in a serious offence are required to be satisfied and further while granting such relief, the court must record the reasons therefor. Anticipatory bail can be granted only in exceptional circumstances where the Court is prima facie of the view that the applicant has falsely been enroped in the crime and would not misuse his liberty".

Economic Offences

78. Power under Section 438 CrPC being an extraordinary remedy, has to be exercised sparingly; more so, in cases of economic offences. Economic offences stand as a different class as they affect the economic fabric of the society. In Directorate of Enforcement v. Ashok Kumar Jain, it was held that in economic offences, the accuse is not entitled to anticipatory bail.

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83. Grant of anticipatory bail at the stage of investigation may frustrate the investigating agency in interrogating the accused and in collecting the useful information and also the materials which might have been concealed. Success in such interrogation would elude if the accused knows that he is protected by the order of the court. Grant of anticipatory bail, particularly in economic offences would definitely hamper the effective investigation. Having regard to the materials said to have been collected by the respondent Enforcement Directorate and considering the stage of the investigation, we are of the view that it is not a fit case to grant anticipatory bail".



8. Accordingly, this Court finds no merit in the present petition in the factual matrix of the case in hand. Moreover, custodial interrogation of the petitioner is necessary for effective investigation and if it is denied, it will leave many loose ends, which is not desired. Thus, the present petition being devoid of merits is hereby dismissed.

9. It is made clear that nothing said hereinabove shall be deemed to be an expression of opinion upon merits of the case/investigation.

07.05.2026
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(RUPINDERJIT CHAHAL)
JUDGE

Whether speaking/reasoned : Yes/No
Whether reportable : Yes/No