

2026.PHHC.026010



IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB & HARYANA
AT CHANDIGARH
CRM-M-68942-2025

Varkha @ Verkha

...Petitioner

Versus

State of Punjab

...Respondent

Sr. No.	Particulars	Details
1	The date when the judgment is reserved	16.02.2026
2	The date when the judgment is pronounced	19.02.2026
3	The date when the judgment is uploaded on the website	
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: Mr. Tarun Singla, Advocate for the petitioner.
Mr. Roshandeep Singh, Assistant Advocate General, Punjab.

MANISHA BATRA, J :-

The present petition has been filed under Section 483 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 (for short ‘BNSS’) by the petitioner seeking grant of regular bail in case bearing FIR No. 19 dated 03.09.2025 registered under Sections 318(4), 319(2), 336(3), 337 and 351(2) of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 (for short ‘BNS’) and Sections 66-C and 66-D of Information Technology Act, 2008 at Police Station Cyber Crime, Bathinda, District Bathinda.

2. The aforementioned FIR was registered on the basis of a statement recorded by the complainant Harinder Singh, alleging that on

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19.08.2025, he had received a *WhatsApp* message and then a WhatsApp call. The caller, while introducing himself as ASI Vijay Khanna posted in CBI, told him that a case of money laundering had been registered against him. By extending threats on the premise that he could be arrested in connection with that case, he subjected him to digital arrest during the period from 19.08.2025 till 25.08.2025 and the complainant was made to transfer an amount of Rs. 90 lakh in different bank accounts till 01.09.2025. On realizing that he had been duped of his money, he reported the matter to the police.

3. After registration of the FIR, investigation proceedings were initiated. During the course of investigation, it was revealed that an amount of Rs. 41 lakhs out of the money transferred from the account of the complainant, was credited in a particular bank account maintained with IndusInd Bank, and out of the same, an amount of Rs. 8 lakh was transferred in the account operative in the name of accused Lovpreet Singh. The said Lovpreet Singh was apprehended. He suffered a disclosure statement to the effect that he had given details of his bank account to co-accused Tejender Singh and Shiva in lieu of a sum of Rs. 10,000/- and after transfer of an amount of Rs. 2,00,000/- in the said account, he had given the same in cash to the petitioner on the asking of accused Tejender Singh. He identified the petitioner and accused Tejender Singh and Shiva Verma from the CCTV footage of the camera installed in the ATM booth, where money was given. She was found to be lodged in custody in some other case. Her presence was secured through production warrants on 01.10.2025. She was formally taken into custody.

Investigation has now concluded.

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4. It is argued by learned counsel for the petitioner that she had not been named in the FIR and has been nominated on the basis of disclosure statement suffered by the co-accused Lovpreet Singh, which cannot be considered to be admissible in evidence. She is not a beneficiary to any transaction. The only allegations against her are that of accompanying the accused Lovpreet Singh when he had gone to bank to withdraw an amount of Rs. 2,00,000/-. Even her test identification parade has not been conducted. No money had been transferred to her bank account. She has been in custody since 01.10.2025. The trial will take considerable time to conclude. Her further incarceration would not serve any useful purpose. With these broad submissions, it is urged that she deserves to be extended benefit of bail.

5. Status report has been filed. It is argued by learned State counsel that there are serious allegations against the petitioner as she was also a part of the conspiracy hatched by the co-accused and had withdrawn an amount of Rs. 2,00,000/- from the bank account of the accused Lovpreet Singh. She was captured in the CCTV footage of the camera installed in the ATM booth. The complainant had been cheated in pursuance of a conspiracy hatched between the petitioner and the other accused. She has criminal antecedents. There are chances of her absconding or committing similar offences if extended the benefit of bail. It is, therefore, argued that the petition does not deserve to be allowed.

6. This Court has heard learned counsel for the parties at considerable length.

7. The petitioner, in pursuance of a conspiracy hatched with the co-

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accused, is alleged to have withdrawn an amount of Rs. 2,00,000/- from the bank account of co-accused Lovpreet Singh. This amount was part of the money extracted from the complainant by duping him. The allegations against the petitioner are serious in nature. She was an active participant in the conspiracy to commit cyber fraud. Crimes of this nature are on the rise and have become a growing menace in today's digital age. Cyber criminals are using sophisticated methods to target public persons and institutions. A stringent approach to deter offenders is required. The case is still at its nascent stage. Material witnesses are yet to be examined. The petitioner is involved in two more cases. The apprehension that she may abscond cannot be stated to be unfounded at this stage. Taking into consideration the above-discussed facts, this Court is of the considered opinion that she does not deserve to be released on bail at this stage. Accordingly, the petition is dismissed.

8. It is, however, clarified that the observations made hereinabove shall not be construed as an expression of opinion on the merits of the case and shall not influence the outcome of the trial.

9. Since the main petition has already been decided, pending application, if any, is rendered infructuous.

[MANISHA BATRA]
JUDGE

19th February, 2026
Parveen Sharma

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| 1. Whether speaking/ reasoned | : | Yes / No |
| 2. Whether reportable | : | Yes / No |