IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA AT CHANDIGARH

104 **CRM-M-31372-2026**

Samar Mohan Ranga

....Petitioner

V/s

State of Haryana

....Respondent

Date of decision: 17.07.2026

Date of Uploading : 18.07.2026

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE SUMEET GOEL

Present: Mr. Vinod Ghai, Senior Advocate with
Mr. Ritesh Aggarwal, Advocate for the petitioner.

Mr. Gurmeet Singh, AAG Haryana.

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SUMEET GOEL, J. (Oral)

1. Present petition has been filed on behalf of the petitioner seeking grant of anticipatory/pre-arrest bail under Section 482 of BNSS, 2023 in FIR No.05 dated 24.03.2026 registered for offences punishable under Sections 13(1)(a) read with Section 13(2) of Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 and Sections 316(5), 318(4), 336(3), 338, 340(2) and 61(2) of BNS, 2023 at Police Station State Vigilance and Anti Corruption Bureau, Panchkula.

2. As per the prosecution version, the FIR was lodged on the basis of a reference received from the Government of Haryana regarding serious financial irregularities in Fixed Deposit Receipts (FDRs) and bank accounts of Municipal Corporation, Panchkula maintained with Kotak Mahindra Bank, Sector-11, Panchkula. As per the allegations, the Municipal Corporation Panchkula had recorded sixteen FDRs amounting to more than

Rs.145 crores with a maturity value exceeding Rs.158 crores. During reconciliation of records, substantial discrepancies were noticed between the records maintained by the Municipal Corporation and those supplied by the bank. It has been alleged that eleven FDRs had matured, however the balance reflected in the bank statements did not match with the expected maturity value. Furthermore, certain bank accounts were discovered which were not reflected in the official records of the Municipal Corporation. As per the allegations, the discrepancies revealed a large-scale financial fraud involving public funds and accordingly, the FIR in question came to be registered against unknown bank officials and other unknown persons whose involvement was to be ascertained during the course of investigation.

During the course of investigation, it has surfaced that huge amounts were allegedly siphoned from the accounts of Municipal Corporation Panchkula via routing them through various bank accounts and subsequently utilized for acquisition of immovable properties. The name of the present petitioner has surfaced during the course of investigation on the basis of material collected by the investigating agency, including financial transactions and property dealings connected with the main accused persons.

3. Learned senior counsel for the petitioner has iterated that the petitioner has been falsely implicated into the FIR in question as he is not named in the FIR. Learned senior counsel has further iterated that the petitioner is neither an employee of Kotak Mahindra Bank nor an employee/official of the Municipal Corporation Panchkula. According to learned senior counsel, the petitioner is merely a property

dealer/commission agent who facilitated certain property transactions on the instructions of co-accused Pushpinder Singh @ Pushpinder Chaudhary. It has been further contended that the amount(s) received in the bank account of the petitioner have been utilized for the purpose of purchase of properties in the names of relative(s) of the said co-accused and the petitioner himself did not derive any wrongful gain from the transaction(s) except for his rightful commission. It has been further contended that the investigation is proceeding on assumptions and conjectures rather than on any tangible material which connects the petitioner with the alleged offence. Learned senior counsel has emphasized that the entire case is based on documentary evidences, bank records and financial transactions which are already in possession of the investigating agency and, therefore, custodial interrogation of the petitioner is not warranted in the factual *milieu* of the case in hand. It has been further contended that the name of the petitioner has surfaced only on the basis of disclosure statement(s) of co-accused persons and there is no direct evidence which would connect the petitioner with the alleged embezzlement. Learned senior counsel has further submitted that the petitioner has deep roots in society; is a permanent resident of the State; has no criminal antecedents and, therefore, there is no need for the custodial interrogation of the petitioner. Learned senior counsel has asserted that the petitioner is willing to join the investigation as and when required, shall not tamper with evidence or influence any witness and shall abide by all the conditions imposed in case he is enlarged on pre-arrest bail. On the strength of these submissions, the grant of concession 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 are serious involving large-scale embezzlement and disclose a well-planned economic offence involving misappropriation of public funds running into several crores of rupees. Learned State counsel has iterated that the investigation has revealed that the substantial amount(s) have been diverted from the accounts of Municipal Corporation, Panchkula and routed through the account(s) connected with the petitioner and thereafter utilized for the purchase of various immovable properties. Referring to reply dated 08.07.2026, by way of affidavit of Bhartendra Kumar, Deputy Superintendent of Police, State Vigilance and Anti Corruption Bureau, Panchkula, learned State counsel has submitted that the petitioner is an active participant in layering and diversion of the proceeds of the crime. The relevant part of the said reply reads thus:

> *"8 That the embezzled money was further diverted illegally from the accounts of Rajat Dahra Swati Tomar SK Agro Tech SK Agro Farm, Sonia, Vinod, Kapil some main beneficiaries into the accounts of Sanat Enterprises (Directors – Sunny Garg and Priyanka Garg), Swati Tomar and other co-accused including Samar Mohan Ranga (Petitioner) in Layer 2 as follows:-*

Sr. No.	*Funds diverted to*	*Debit Amount (Rs.)*	*Credit Amount (Rs.)*	*Net Amount (Rs.)*
1.	*Sanat Enterprises & Allied entities*	*6974,700,230.10*	*30,350,000*	*667,350,230.10*
2.	*Swati Tomar*	*132,196,639.70*	*5,938.621*	*126,258,018.70*
3.	*Pushpinder*	*294.619.507.24*	*211.307,000*	*83,312,507.24*
4.	*Samar Mohan Ranga (Petitioner)*	*5,19,00,000 (Five crores and nineteen lacs)*		*5,19,00,000*
5.	*Aryan Singh*	*35,00,000*	*20,900,000*	*14,100,000*
	Total(Rs.)	*1,211,416,377.04*	*268,495,621*	*942,920,756.04*

9. That during investigation, it is revealed that the petitioner-accused Samar Mohan Ranga was hand in glove with accused Pushpinder, Swati Tomar, Rajat Dahra etc. from the very initial stage of the conspiracy when one non-genuine/gorged bank account (Kotak Mahindra Bank, Sector – 11, Panchkula A/c No.2015073031) was opened in the name of Municipal Corporation, Panchkula by these accused persons on 21.05.2020 and few months thereafter the above mentioned embezzled money (Rs.5,19,00,000/-) started being siphoned into the joined account (No.115110100006348 Union Bank of India) of petitioner-accused Samar Mohan Ranga and his wife Neha Samar Ranga from the accounts of accused Kapil Kumar, Rajat Dahra, Swati Tomar and firms namely – SK Agrotech (Director – Kulbir Bagri – demised) and SK Agro Farms (Director – Priyanka Raijada) on various dates between 17.03.2021 to 12.12.2023 as shown in the following table:-

Sr. No.	*Account Holder Name*	*Account No.*	*Date of Transaction*	*Amount transferred in the account of petitioner*
1.	*SK Agro Farms*	*658920110000242 (Bank of India)*	*17.03.2021*	*20,00,000/- (Twenty lacs)*
2.	*SK Agro Tech*	*3299201000347 (Canara Bank)*	*18.03.2021*	*20,00,000/- (Twenty lacs)*
3.	*SK Agro Tech*	*3299201000347 (Canara Bank)*	*22.03.2021*	*20,00,000/- (Twenty lacs)*
4.	*SK Agro Tech*	*3299201000347 (Canara Bank)*	*23.03.2021*	*10,00,000/- (Ten lacs)*
5.	*Rajat Dahra*	*47701508648 (ICICI Bank)*	*13.07.2021*	*91,00,000/- (Ninety one lacs)*
6.	*Kapil Kumar*	*10073794935 (IDFC Bank)*	*31.07.2021*	*25,00,000/- (Twenty Five lacs)*
7.	*Rajat Dahra*	*3541000108247140 (PNB)*	*24.09.2021*	*60,00,000/- (Sixty lacs)*
8.	*Rajat Dahra*	*3541000108247140 (PNB)*	*02.11.2021*	*75,00,000/- (Seventy Five lacs)*
9.	*Rajat Dahra*	*3541000108247140 (PNB)*	*20.11.2021*	*25,00,000/- (Twenty Five lacs)*
10.	*Swati Tomar*	*1183000101142310 (PNB)*	*29.11.2023*	*1,05,00,000/- (One crore and*

				Five lacs)
11	*Swati Tomar*	*1183000101142310 (PNB)*	*12.12.2023*	*68,00,000/- (Sixty Eight lacs)*
		Total		*5,19,00,000/- (Five crores and Nineteen lacs)*

It is also relevant to mentioned here that recovery of above mentioned amount of Rs.5,19,00,000/- (Five Crores and Nineteen lacs) from the petitioner-accused Samar Mohan Ranga is still pending.

10. That during the investigation conducted so far, total 09 accused persons including Dalip Raghav, Pushpender, Vikas Kaushik, Rajat Dahra, Swati Tomar, Samar Mohan Ranga (Petitioner), Kapil and others, have been arrested on various dates as shown in the following table alongwith present status of their custody

Sr. No.	*Name of Accused*	*Date of Arrest*	*Present status of custody*
1.	*Dalip Raghav*	*25.03.2026*	*In judicial custody*
2.	*Rajat Dahra*	*26.03.2026*	*In judicial custody*
3.	*Kapil*	*31.03.2026*	*In judicial custody*
4.	*Vikash Kaushik*	*02.04.2026*	*In judicial custody*
5.	*Swati Tomar*	*06.04.2026*	*In judicial custody*
6.	*Pushpender Singh*	*08.04.2026*	*In judicial custody*
7.	*Sonia*	*23.04.2026*	*In judicial custody*
8.	*Priyanka Raijada*	*04.05.2026*	*In judicial custody*
9.	*Neha Samar Ranga*	*07.04.2026*	*In judicial custody*

It is relevant to mentioned here that two accused persons namely – Kulbir Bagri (Proprietor/Director of SK Agro Tech) and Vinod Kumar have demised. Arrest of remaining accused persons namely Samar Mohan Range (Petitioner), Aryan Singh, Sunny Garg, Priyanka Garg, Satish Kumar and some officials of Municipal Corporation, Panchkula and Kotak Mahindra Bank involved in the case is still remaining. The afore-named accused Sunny Garg, Priyanka Garg and Satish Kumar are out of India and their LOC's have been issued. Earnest efforts are being made by the answering respondent to arrest the aforesaid accused persons."

Raising submissions in tandem with the aforesaid reply, learned State counsel has contended that the transactions in question are numerous and complex for which custodial interrogation of the petitioner is necessary to ascertain the money trail, identify beneficiaries and recover relevant documents and evidence. Learned State counsel has emphasized that releasing the petitioner on bail at this crucial stage may hamper the ongoing investigation and potentially lead to tampering with evidence or influencing of witness(s). Accordingly, a prayer has been made for the dismissal of the instant petition.

5. I have heard the learned counsel for the rival parties and have gone through the available record of the case.

6. It would be apposite to refer herein to a judgment of the Hon'ble Supreme Court titled as ***Devinder Kumar Bansal vs. The State of Punjab, 2025 INSC 320,*** relevant whereof reads as under:

> *"21. The parameters for grant of anticipatory bail in a serious offence like corruption are required to besatisfied. Anticipatory bail can be granted only in exceptional circumstances where the Court is prima facie of the view that the applicant has been falsely enroped in the crime or the allegations are politically motivated or are frivolous. So far as the case at hand is concerned, it cannot be said that any exceptional circumstances have been made out by the petitioner accused for grant of anticipatory bail and there is no frivolity in the prosecution.*
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> *22. In the aforesaid context, we may refer to a pronouncement in* ***Central Bureau of Investigation v. V. Vijay Sai Reddy reported in (2013) 7 Scale 15****, wherein this Court expressed thus:*
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> > *"28. While granting bail, the court has to keep in mind the nature of accusation, the nature of evidence in support thereof, the severity of the punishment which conviction will entail, the character of the accused, circumstances which are peculiar to the accused, reasonable possibility of securing the presence of the accused at the trial, reasonable apprehension of the witnesses*

> *being tampered with, the larger interests of the public/State and other similar considerations. It has also to be kept in mind that for the purpose of granting bail, the Legislature has used the words "reasonable grounds for believing" instead of "the evidence" which means the Court dealing with the grant of bail can only satisfy it as to whether there is a genuine case against the accused and that the prosecution will be able to produce prima facie evidence in support of the charge. It is not expected, at this stage, to have the evidence establishing the guilt of the accused beyond reasonable doubt."*

23. The presumption of innocence, by itself, cannot be thesole consideration for grant of anticipatory bail. The presumption of innocence is one of the considerations, which the court should keep in mind while considering the plea for anticipatory bail. The salutary rule is to balance the cause of the accused and the cause of public justice. Over solicitous homage to the accused's liberty can, sometimes, defeat the cause of public justice.

24. If liberty is to be denied to an accused to ensure corruption free society, then the courts should not hesitate in denying such liberty. Where overwhelming considerations in the nature aforesaid require denial of anticipatory bail, it has to be denied. It is altogether a different thing to say that once the investigation is over and charge-sheet is filed, the court may consider to grant regular bail to a public servant - accused of indulging in corruption.

25. Avarice is a common frailty of mankind and Robert Walpole's famous pronouncement that all men have their price, notwithstanding the unsavoury cynicism that it suggests, is not very far from truth. As far back as more than two centuries ago, it was Burke who cautioned: "Among a people generally corrupt, liberty cannot last long". In more recent years, Romain Rolland lamented that France fell because there was corruption without indignation. Corruption has, in it, very dangerous potentialities. Corruption, a word of wide connotation has, in respect of almost all the spheres of our day to day life, all the world over, the limited meaning of allowing decisions and actions to be influenced not by the rights or wrongs of acase but by the prospects of monetary gains or other selfish considerations.

26. If even a fraction of what was the vox pupuli about the magnitude of corruption to be true, then it would not be far removed from the truth, that it is the rampant corruption indulged in with impunity by highly

> *placed persons that has led to economic unrest in this country. If one is asked to name one sole factor that effectively arrested the progress of our society to prosperity, undeniably it is corruption. If the society in a developing country faces a menace greater than even the one from the hired assassins to its law and order, then that is from the corrupt elements at the higher echelons of the Government and of the political parties."*

7. As per the material available on record and the stand of the prosecution before this Court, indubitably, serious allegations have been levelled against the petitioner. The allegations in the present case pertain to a large scale financial fraud involving public funds of Municipal Corporation, Panchkula. The material collected during the course of investigation *prima facie* reflects that huge amounts were transferred through various accounts and have been allegedly utilized for acquisition of immovable properties. The role attributed to the petitioner is that he acted as an intermediary in the alleged diversion and utilization of funds siphoned from the accounts of Municipal Corporation, Panchkula. During the course of investigation, it has surfaced that substantial amounts were transferred into account(s) connected with the petitioner and were, thereafter, utilized for purchase of various immovable properties in the names of family members and associates of the main accused namely Pushpinder Singh @ Pushpinder Chaudhary. The contention that the petitioner is merely a property dealer and acted on the instructions of the co-accused does not merit acceptance at this stage, as the material placed before the Court *prima facie* indicates that substantial amounts were routed through accounts connected with the petitioner and properties were purchased pursuant thereto. Whether the petitioner acted knowingly or innocently is a matter that can only be determined after the completion of investigation/trial. It is

trite law that the anticipatory bail is an extraordinary relief and is not to be granted as a matter of right particularly in cases involving serious economic offences.

8. The argument that the case is based solely on documentary evidence does not persuade this Court as the economic offences involving complex financial transactions require detailed investigation. The exact nature and extent of the involvement of the petitioner can be effectively unearthed only through a free and fair investigation. Economic offences involving public funds have far-reaching consequences on society and public administration. Such offences are committed with deliberate planning and affect public confidence in institutions. Therefore, they require a stringent approach while considering a prayer for anticipatory bail. The investigation in the present case is at a crucial stage. At this stage, the material collected during investigation cannot be brushed aside as vague or baseless.

9. The plea of false implication raised by the petitioner is a disputed question of fact and involves appreciation of evidence, which cannot be adjudicated upon at this stage. The same can only be adjudicated upon the conclusion of the investigation or during the course of trial. In the considered opinion of this Court, granting anticipatory bail at this stage may hamper the on-going investigation. 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. Furthermore, the trial Court has already declined the plea of the petitioner after considering the relevant factors, including the manner in which the name of the petitioner surfaced

during investigation. It is befitting to mention here that while considering a plea forgrant 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 wider impact of such alleged iniquities on the society. At this stage, there is no material on record to hold that a *prima facie* case is not made out against the petitioner. The material which has come on record and the preliminary investigation, appear 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) 1039***, the Hon'ble 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 task of disintering offences would not conduct themselves as offenders."*

10. In the present case, the investigation is still at a crucial stage and the grant of anticipatory bail at this juncture will impede the fair and

effective investigation. Considering the nature and seriousness of the allegations, the specific role assigned, the stage of investigation as also the necessity of custodial interrogation of the petitioner, this Court is of the considered opinion that the petitioner does not deserve the concession of anticipatory bail in the factual *milieu* of the case in hand.

11. In view of the prevenient ratiocination, it is ordained thus:

(i) The instant petition is devoid of merits and is hereby dismissed.

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

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

(SUMEET GOEL)
JUDGE

July 17, 2026
Ajay

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