

2026:PHHC:087589



IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA AT CHANDIGARH

CRM-M-32965-2026

ANURAG KHULLAR @ VISHAL

.... Petitioner

Vs.

U.T. Chandigarh

.... Respondent

Reserved on: 11.06.2026

Pronounced on: 15.06.2026

Pronounced Fully/Operative Part: Fully

CORAM: HON'BLE MR JUSTICE DEEPAK GUPTA

Present: - Mr. Vikrant Rana, Advocate, for the Petitioner.

Ms. Simsi Dhir, A.P.P., UT, Chandigarh.

DEEPAK GUPTA, J.

By way of the present petition filed under Section 482 of the BNSS, 2023, petitioner seeks grant of anticipatory bail in case FIR No.81 dated 13.05.2026, registered under Section 318(4) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 and Sections 8 & 12 of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, at Police Station Sector 39, Chandigarh.

2. The FIR was lodged on the joint complaint of Jaspreet Kaur and her brother Pushpinder Singh Bagga. As per the allegations, Baljit Singh, husband of complainant Jaspreet Kaur, was confined in jail in connection with a criminal case. For securing his release on bail, the complainants came in contact with the petitioner, who allegedly represented himself to be an advocate and further claimed that he had strong connections with senior officials and members of the judiciary. It is alleged that the petitioner assured the complainants that he would get bail granted in favour of Baljit Singh and, on that pretext, demanded money from time to time towards alleged expenses for advocates, sureties and other persons. The complainants claim to have paid various amounts through Google Pay, NEFT, UPI and also in cash. It is further alleged that the petitioner showed them a purported bail order allegedly

passed by this Court, which did not bear any official seal and appeared suspicious. According to the complainants, no bail application was, in fact, filed and they were cheated of approximately ₹10,92,400/-.

3. Learned counsel for the petitioner submits that the petitioner has been falsely implicated. It is contended that the petitioner is a practicing advocate, duly enrolled with the Bar Council of Punjab and Haryana in 2023, and that the complainant party had professionally engaged him in relation to the bail matter of Baljit Singh. The dispute, if any, regarding fee or professional charges is stated to be civil in nature, which has been given a criminal colour only to pressurize and harass the petitioner. It is further submitted that there is no material to show dishonest intention on the part of the petitioner from the very inception, which is necessary to constitute the offence of cheating. Learned counsel submits that the petitioner never claimed to be a public servant and, therefore, the provisions of Sections 8 and 12 of the Prevention of Corruption Act are not attracted.

4. Learned counsel also submits that the entire case is based upon documentary evidence, bank transactions, electronic record and statements, which are already available with the Investigating Agency. Thus, no useful purpose would be served by custodial interrogation of the petitioner. The petitioner undertakes to join the investigation as and when required.

5. It is also submitted that the petitioner had only examined the papers of Baljit Singh, who was confined in Burail Jail in connection with offences under the UAPA Act and Arms Act, and had obtained legal opinion from senior advocates before taking any professional decision. According to the petitioner, discussions had taken place with the complainants regarding professional fee and legal expenses. The petitioner further alleges that the complainant side has criminal background and had threatened him and his family members, for which he had already submitted a representation to the police authorities.

6. On the strength of the aforesaid submissions, it is argued that the petitioner is a young advocate having roots in society, has no criminal

antecedents, and that his arrest would cause irreparable injury to his professional reputation and livelihood. Prayer has accordingly been made for grant of anticipatory bail.

7. *Per contra*, learned counsel appearing for the respondent–UT, Chandigarh has vehemently opposed the petition and, by referring to the status report, submits that the prosecution case is not founded merely upon the statements of the complainants but is duly corroborated by documentary as well as electronic evidence collected during investigation. It is submitted that the bank account statements of the complainants and the petitioner have been obtained and verified, which prima facie establish that an amount of ₹5,92,000/- was transferred by the complainants to the petitioner through banking channels. Apart from the aforesaid amount, the complainants have consistently alleged that a further sum of ₹5,00,000/- was paid in cash to the petitioner on 28.08.2025 in the parking area of the Punjab and Haryana High Court.

8. Learned State counsel submits that the source of the said payments has also been verified during investigation. The complainant Jaspreet Bagga had obtained a loan from Aditya Birla Capital Limited on 25.09.2025, which fact stands reflected in her bank account. It has further been verified that substantial amounts were thereafter transferred to the petitioner through multiple transactions. The complainants have also produced documents showing that a parcel of land had been mortgaged for arranging money allegedly demanded by the petitioner. Consequently, according to the prosecution, material collected during investigation prima facie establishes payment of approximately ₹10,92,000/- by the complainants to the petitioner. In these circumstances, the contention that the transactions involved only insignificant amounts is stated to be wholly misconceived.

9. Learned State counsel further submits that the allegations against the petitioner are not confined to cheating alone. A particularly serious allegation is that the petitioner fabricated a forged bail order purportedly passed by this Court and represented to the complainants that bail had been

granted to Baljit Singh. As per the allegation, the document shown to the complainants did not bear any official seal and appeared suspicious on its face. More importantly, the matter of Baljit Singh was not even pending before the Bench allegedly shown in the forged order. It is argued that fabrication and use of a forged judicial order strikes at the very foundation of the administration of justice and undermines the sanctity and credibility of judicial proceedings. Investigation regarding the creation and circulation of the alleged forged document is still underway and custodial interrogation of the petitioner is necessary to identify and recover the electronic devices, software and digital records used in its preparation.

10. Refuting the submission that Sections 8 and 12 of the Prevention of Corruption Act are inapplicable, learned State counsel argues that the offence under Section 8 does not require the accused himself to be a public servant. The gravamen of the allegation is that the petitioner demanded and accepted money on the representation that the same was required to influence Judges, Court officials and other public servants for securing bail. Such allegations, if established, would squarely attract the ingredients of taking gratification for exercising personal influence over public servants and the corresponding provisions relating to abetment under the Act. Thus, the argument that the petitioner was not a public servant is stated to be legally untenable.

11. Learned State counsel has also controverted the plea raised by the petitioner that he himself was a victim of threats from the complainant side. In this regard, reference is made to the communication dated 05.06.2026 issued by the ACP, Kalka, which records that the petitioner himself informed the police that he was no longer facing any threat and would approach the authorities in case any such situation arose in future. It is, therefore, contended that the plea of threat has been projected only as a defensive measure after initiation of the present criminal proceedings.

12. Another circumstance highlighted by the prosecution is that the petitioner has allegedly been evading arrest. It is submitted that several raids

have been conducted at his known addresses as well as at the residences of his relatives and in-laws, but he could not be apprehended. Analysis of Call Detail Records and Internet Protocol Detail Records of the mobile numbers allegedly used by him has also not yielded his whereabouts. Learned State counsel submits that a person who is deliberately avoiding investigation and evading arrest ordinarily does not deserve the equitable relief of anticipatory bail.

13. It is further submitted that during investigation, a laptop allegedly used by the petitioner was recovered from the possession of his wife and has been sent to the Central Forensic Science Laboratory for examination and retrieval of deleted data. The mobile phone of the complainant has also been forwarded for forensic analysis with a view to recover chats, electronic records and other digital evidence relevant to the case. Since the investigation is presently focused on recovery and examination of electronic evidence relating to the alleged forged judicial order and other fraudulent communications, custodial interrogation of the petitioner is stated to be indispensable. According to the prosecution, grant of anticipatory bail at this stage may seriously impede the investigation and create a possibility of tampering with or destruction of digital evidence.

14. In support of the aforesaid submissions, reliance has been placed upon ***Gurbaksh Singh Sibbia etc. v. State of Punjab, 1980 (2) SCC 565*** and ***Joginder Kumar v. State of UP, 1994 (4) SCC 260*** to contend that anticipatory bail is an extraordinary discretionary relief and cannot be granted as a matter of course. Reliance is also placed upon the Constitution Bench judgment in ***Sushila Aggarwal v. State (NCT of Delhi), 2020 (05) SCC 1***, wherein it was held that while considering a prayer for anticipatory bail, the Court must take into account the nature and gravity of the accusations, the role attributed to the accused, the possibility of influencing the investigation, tampering with evidence or intimidating witnesses, and the likelihood of the accused fleeing from justice. It is argued that each of these considerations operates against the petitioner in the present case.

15. Learned State counsel accordingly contends that the allegations disclose a well-planned scheme involving inducement, receipt of substantial amounts of money, false representations regarding influence over public officials, criminal intimidation and, most significantly, fabrication of a purported judicial order of this Court. Such allegations cannot be trivialized as a mere dispute concerning professional fee. The case, according to the prosecution, involves serious offences affecting not only the complainants but also the integrity of the judicial process itself. It is further pointed out that *CRWP-5498-2026* filed by the complainants is pending before this Court, wherein the progress of investigation is under consideration and the matter is now fixed for 09.07.2026. On these premises, prayer has been made for dismissal of the present petition.

16. I have heard learned counsel for the parties and have carefully perused the material available on record.

17. Merely because the petitioner is a practicing advocate cannot constitute a ground for grant of anticipatory bail. The status of a profession neither places a person above the law nor creates a separate standard for considering a prayer under Section 482 BNSS. The Court is required to assess the matter on the touchstone of settled principles governing anticipatory bail, namely the nature and gravity of the accusation, the role attributed to the accused, the requirement of custodial interrogation and the overall impact of the alleged conduct upon the investigation.

18. In the present case, the material collected during investigation prima facie indicates receipt of amounts exceeding ₹10,92,000/- from the complainants. Significantly, the allegation is not merely of receipt of professional fee but of obtaining money on the representation that the same was required for influencing public officials and securing a favourable judicial order. The prosecution has also placed on record material suggesting that a forged bail order purportedly emanating from this Court was shown to the complainants. The seriousness of such an allegation cannot be understated, as

any attempt to fabricate judicial records strikes directly at the administration of justice and warrants a thorough and effective investigation.

19. Furthermore, forensic examination of electronic devices is still in progress. Recovery of the original devices allegedly used for preparation and transmission of the forged documents, identification of accomplices, tracing of digital footprints and retrieval of deleted data are all matters which legitimately require effective custodial interrogation. At this stage, the Court cannot overlook the prosecution's assertion that the petitioner has been evading arrest despite repeated efforts made by the investigating agency.

20. Having regard to the nature of accusations, the amount allegedly involved, the requirement of custodial interrogation for recovery and examination of digital evidence, and the stage of investigation, this Court is of the considered opinion that no case is made out for exercise of the extraordinary discretionary jurisdiction of granting anticipatory bail.

21. Consequently, the present petition is dismissed. Any observation made herein shall be construed only for the purpose of deciding the present petition and shall not be treated as an expression on the merits of the case during trial.

15.06.2026

Vivek

**(DEEPAK GUPTA)
JUDGE**

*Whether Speaking/reasoned
Whether reportable*

*Yes
No*

Uploaded on: 16.06.2026