



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

(111)

**CWP No. 28771 of 2026
Date of Decision: 07.09.2026**

Pavitar Singh

.....Petitioner

Versus

Punjab State Information Commission and Others

.....Respondents

CORAM: HON'BLE MS. JUSTICE KIRTI SINGH

Present: Mr. Raj Kaushik, Advocate
for the petitioner.

KIRTI SINGH, J. (ORAL)

1. The present writ petition under Articles 226/227 of the Constitution of India has been filed seeking quashing of the order dated 05.08.2026 passed by the Punjab State Information Commission in Appeal Case No.5645 of 2025, whereby the petitioner's second appeal under the Right to Information Act, 2005 (for short, 'the RTI Act') was disposed of by declining disclosure of the information sought. The petitioner also seeks a direction to the concerned Public Information Officer/Police authorities to furnish complete and certified copies of the action taken report, inquiry record, settlement affidavits and other documents concerning FIR No.0093 dated 22.11.2024 registered at Police Station Kheri Gandian, District Patiala.

2. Briefly stated, the petitioner submitted an RTI application bearing Reference No.387 dated 04.07.2025 to the Public Information Officer, Office of the Senior Superintendent of Police, Patiala, seeking copies of all actions taken by the Police Department and the Government of Punjab in response to FIR No.0093 dated 22.11.2024, from the filing of the



complaint/FIR till the furnishing of the information. No information having been furnished within the prescribed period, the petitioner preferred a first appeal on 06.08.2025 and thereafter a second appeal before the Punjab State Information Commission, which came to be registered as Appeal Case No.5645 of 2025. The FIR placed on record shows that FIR No.0093 was registered on 22.11.2024 at Police Station Kheri Gandian, District Patiala, in respect of an incident dated 13.11.2024. Jasvir Ram is reflected as the complainant/informant, whereas the persons shown as accused in the FIR are unknown persons. The FIR records the offences alleged as well as the action taken by the police on the complaint.

3. Before the Commission, the petitioner maintained that the information sought related to official police action and was connected with the dispute concerning the land in question, and relied upon the pendency of civil proceedings to assert that the information was required in that context. The petitioner further disputed the objection that the information constituted third-party information. The Police authorities, on the other hand, took the stand that the information sought could not be furnished as it constituted third-party information exempt under Section 8(1)(j) of the RTI Act. On 05.08.2026, the SHO, Police Station Kheri Gandian, placed before the Commission letter No.769 dated 05.08.2026 along with an affidavit dated 13.05.2026, stating that a settlement had taken place between the concerned parties and that the complainant, Jasvir Singh, had furnished an affidavit to that effect, and that the petitioner was neither the complainant nor an accused in the FIR. On consideration of this material, the Commission declined the information and disposed of the second appeal.



4. Learned counsel for the petitioner submits that the impugned order is unsustainable, as the information sought concerns action taken by public authorities pursuant to an FIR and cannot be treated as private information merely because the petitioner is not a named party in the FIR. It is further submitted that Section 6(2) of the RTI Act does not require an applicant to disclose any reason for seeking information or to establish any personal interest in it, and that the information has a direct bearing on the pending civil proceedings concerning the affected landowners.

5. I have heard learned counsel for the petitioner and perused the material placed on record.

6. There can be no quarrel with the proposition that an applicant seeking information under the RTI Act is not required, by virtue of Section 6(2), to disclose the reasons for making the request. However, Section 6(2) cannot be read as conferring an unrestricted right to disclosure notwithstanding the exemptions specifically contemplated by Section 8 of the RTI Act. The absence of a requirement to disclose the purpose of seeking information is distinct from the question whether the particular information sought is otherwise liable to disclosure under the Act.

7. In the present case, the RTI application is not confined merely to a copy of the FIR or to a particular document which is, on the face of it, a public document. The petitioner sought all photocopies of the actions taken by the Police Department and the Government of Punjab in response to the FIR, from the filing of the complaint/FIR till the time of furnishing the information. The request thus encompasses the entire action taken record and is, by its very nature, capable of including material concerning the



complainant and other persons involved in the criminal proceedings. The material placed before this Court also shows that the FIR concerns a complainant, namely Jasvir Ram, and several persons described therein as unknown accused, and that the police record further contains the complaint and the subsequent action taken by the police. The Commission was accordingly justified in examining the request not merely by reference to the fact that the record was held by a public authority, but by reference to the nature and contents of the information sought, since the mere fact that information is available with a public authority does not, by itself, render every part of it liable to disclosure.

8. The petitioner's contention that he cannot be denied information merely because he is not a named complainant or accused does not, by itself, advance his case. The Commission has not declined the request solely on the ground of absence of locus; it has considered the nature of the information sought and the objection raised by the Police authorities that the information concerned third parties and attracted the exemption under Section 8(1)(j), with the petitioner's status being one of the circumstances taken into consideration.

9. Equally, the petitioner's reliance upon the pending civil proceedings and the alleged connection of the FIR with the land dispute does not, by itself, establish a larger public interest sufficient to displace the exemption claimed in respect of third-party information. The petitioner's own RTI application records that the information may be used in the media and may also be produced before an agency, court or commission, and the subsequent written submissions likewise show that the information is sought



in the context of the pending civil proceedings. The fact that the information may be useful to a litigant in connection with pending proceedings cannot, without more, convert a private requirement for documents into a larger public interest within the meaning of the exemption framework under the RTI Act, which does not contemplate disclosure of third-party information merely because the applicant considers it useful for advancing his case in another proceeding.

10. This Court, while exercising jurisdiction under Articles 226/227 of the Constitution against an order passed by the State Information Commission, does not ordinarily sit as an appellate authority over the decision of the Commission. Interference would be warranted only where the order is shown to suffer from a patent error of law, perversity, jurisdictional infirmity, non-application of mind or violation of principles of natural justice.

11. Tested on these parameters, no such infirmity is made out in the present case. The Commission considered the objection raised by the Police authorities, the status of the petitioner vis-à-vis the FIR, the material regarding settlement between the concerned parties and the nature of the information sought, and the petitioner has not been able to demonstrate that the Commission acted without jurisdiction or that its decision is based on a consideration wholly alien to the statutory scheme. The petitioner's contention, in substance, seeks a reconsideration of the Commission's decision declining disclosure of information which the concerned authority has treated as third-party information, and such re-appreciation of the material, in the absence of any patent error or jurisdictional infirmity, is not



warranted in the limited supervisory jurisdiction of this Court.

12. It is clarified that this Court is not expressing any opinion on the merits of the underlying land dispute, the pending civil proceedings, the allegations contained in the FIR, or the settlement stated to have been arrived at between the concerned parties. The consideration in the present proceedings is confined to the legality of the impugned decision under the RTI Act.

13. In view of the above, this Court finds no ground to interfere with the order dated 05.08.2026 passed by the Punjab State Information Commission in Appeal Case No.5645 of 2025.

14. Accordingly, the present writ petition is dismissed.

15. Pending miscellaneous application(s), if any, shall also stand disposed of.

(KIRTI SINGH)
JUDGE

September 07, 2026

Ritika

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