

CRM-M-37645-2026

1

IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA AT
CHANDIGARH

150-3

CRM-M-37645-2026

Neha Samar Ranga @ Neha Ranga

...Petitioner

V/s

State of Haryana

...Respondent

Date of decision: 05.10.2026

Date of Uploading : 06.10.2026

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE SUMEET GOEL

Present: Mr. Vinod Ghai, Senior Advocate with
Mr. Arnav Ghai, Advocate and
Mr. R.S. Bagga, Advocate for the petitioner.
Mr. Gurmeet Singh, AAG Haryana.

SUMEET GOEL, J. (Oral)

1. Present petition has been filed under Section 483 of BNSS, 2023 on behalf of the petitioner seeking grant of regular bail in case 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



CRM-M-37645-2026

2

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, the prosecution has alleged that funds originating from the unauthorized and fraudulent accounts of the Municipal Corporation were transferred into several accounts connected with the accused persons and subsequently again transferred to the second layer of accounts connected with other accused. According to the investigating agency, an amount of approximately ₹5.19 crore was credited into the joint account maintained in the names of the petitioner (herein) and her husband namely Samar Mohan Ranga with Union Bank of India. The prosecution has further alleged that the said account was used for receiving/dealing with the allegedly misappropriated public funds and the petitioner and her husband were stated to be the signatories of the account. The investigation has further revealed that the alleged transaction(s) formed part of the larger chain of transactions through which the allegedly misappropriated funds were transferred from the accounts of the Municipal Corporation to the accounts of different accused persons. The prosecution has also relied upon the banking records and the money trail collected during investigation.



CRM-M-37645-2026

3

3. Learned senior counsel for the petitioner has iterated that the petitioner has been falsely implicated into the FIR in question as she has neither been named in the FIR nor attributed any role at the initial stage of investigation. Learned senior counsel has further iterated that the name of the petitioner came into light subsequently only on the basis of second disclosure statement of co-accused — Priyanka Raizada. It has been further contended that the petitioner was merely a joint account holder maintained with Union Bank of India along with her husband, which he had opened prior to their marriage. According to learned senior counsel, the petitioner ceased to be a joint holder of the said account on 31.07.2021 and there is no material to establish that the petitioner had operated the account or participated in the transactions which form the subject matter of the FIR in question. It has been further argued that the petitioner cannot be made vicariously liable merely because she was a joint account holder and the question whether the petitioner actually operated the account, derived any benefit from the alleged transactions or had knowledge of the source of the funds are matters which require adjudication at the stage of trial. Learned senior counsel has emphasized that the prosecution has not effected any recovery from the petitioner and her name does not figure in the list of beneficiary accounts relied upon by the prosecution. Furthermore, the case against the petitioner substantially rests upon the second disclosure statement of a co-accused which, by itself, is a weak piece of evidence/material and cannot be made the sole basis for the continued incarceration of the petitioner. It has been further contended that the petitioner is a woman having minor children to look after and has no criminal antecedents. Moreover, the challan has already been presented and



CRM-M-37645-2026

4

the petitioner has been in custody since 06.05.2026. It has been further pointed out that trial is likely to take considerable time to conclude given the voluminous nature of the charge-sheet, containing more than 21,000 pages as also the fact that out of 79 witnesses cited, none has been examined till date. On the strength of these submissions, the grant of regular bail is entreated for.

4. In *oppugnation*, learned State counsel has opposed the prayer for grant of regular bail by arguing that the present case relates to a serious economic offence involving diversion and misappropriation of public funds belonging to the Municipal Corporation, Panchkula. Referring to reply dated 22.07.2026 by way of affidavit of Arvind Kamboj, HPS, Deputy Superintendent of Police, State Vigilance and Anti Corruption Bureau, Panchkula, learned State counsel has iterated that the banking transactions along with the other material collected during investigation, *prima facie*, connect the petitioner with the offence in question. The relevant part of the said reply reads thus:

“13. That during investigation it was found that the petitioner along with her husband co-accused namely Samar Mohan Ranga have on the instructions of Pushpender Singh, the petitioner and her husband used to buy properties which is amply clear from perusal of the table mentioned above in foregoing para no. 9 which shows as an amount of Rs. 3,46,00,000/- (Three crores and forty six lacs) was siphoned into the joint account of petitioner and his wife from 17.03.2021 to 02.11.2021. Accused Vabhav Sethi or his brother in law Pushpender used to come to the house of petitioner for collecting their share in cash. Further, as per the bank statements of petitioner's account showing details of use of siphoned money clearly reflect that the amount was used for his personal expenses and some amount was transferred into the bank account of her mother-in-law. Smt. Rajinder Ranga and back into his own account some amount was transferred in the account of his relative Kuldeep Singh Saini (18,00,000/-). It is also noteworthy that out of total 04 properties shown



by the petitioner, one was purchased in Jan-2022, one in Dec-2023 and one in June-2024, whereas, a total of 3,46,00,000/- had credited in his account till Nov-2021 and remaining 1,73,00,000/- credited in his account in November and December-2023. Thus, no money was credited in his account in January-2022, December-2023 and June-2024 (i.e. at the time of alleged purchase of properties). Thus, as per bank statement of petitioner no money was ever transferred from his account into the accounts of said property sellers- Sh. Harchand Singh, Inderjit Singh and Gurmeet Singh.

14. That, it is respectfully submitted that the petitioner/accused is involved in a syndicate and well-planned financial fraud causing loss to the public exchequer running into crores of rupees belonging to the Municipal Corporation, Panchkula. The material collected during investigation clearly reveals that the petitioner, in active connivance with co-accused persons, was part and parcel of the deep-rooted conspiracy to misappropriate public money for personal gains. The magnitude of the scam, its organized nature, and the manner in which government funds were siphoned off indicate that the petitioner is one of the main conspirators and beneficiaries of the embezzled amount.

15. That the role of petitioner has been instrumental along with co-accused in this big scam of embezzlement of public money. Considering the gravity, magnitude, and seriousness of the offences, the petitioners/accused persons does not deserve the concession of regular bail by this Hon'ble Court. The offences committed strike at the very foundation of public trust and administrative integrity. The investigation is still going on to trace the entire money trail, identify all beneficiaries and to recover the remaining embezzled funds. As mentioned in the forgoing paras some of accused persons are yet to be arrested and recovery of the entire embezzled money of Rs.104 crores are yet to be effected. ”

Furthermore, referring to additional affidavit dated 05.10.2026 of Arvind Kamboj, HPS, Deputy Superintendent of Police, State Vigilance and Anti Corruption Bureau, Panchkula, learned State counsel has contended that the petitioner alongwith her husband (co-accused) was hand in glove with co-accused from the very initial stage of the conspiracy. The relevant part of the said affidavit reads thus:

“It is also relevant to mention here that in the above mentioned joined account no.115110100006348, the registered mobile no. was 7696000036 which is in the name of petitioner, The registered email id is SAMAR.RANGA@GMAIL.COM. As per Bank Records, the account was originally opened in the Individual Capacity of Mr. Samar Mohan Ranga on 06.02.2012. Subsequently on 12.11.2013 his wife Mrs. Neha Samar Ranga was added as the second joint account holder with mode of Operation being "Either or Survivor". Further, as per information given by the bank, during the specific period 15.03.2021 to 31.12.2022 and 25.11.2023 to 31.01.2024, most of the withdrawals/Transfers from the account were carried out through UPI transactions. including Self Transfers/Payments through Google Pay. Some transaction were also carried out through Cheques bearing the Signature of Mr. Samar Mohan Ranga. Further, as per bank records, the account holder Mrs. Neha Samar Ranga was a Joint Account Holder in the account from 12.11.2013 to 31.07.2021. Thus, being the joint account holder, the petitioner is equally responsible for all transactions carried out in the said joint account. Copies of the Account Opening Form and bank Statement are annexed herewith as Annexure R-3 (colly.).

4. That, the petitioner separated herself from the above joint account on 31.07.2021 and got opened her separate saving account no.187712050000001 in Union Bank of India, Desu Majra, Mohali on 31.07.2021. The registered mobile nos. linked with said account are 8727868000 (Samar Mohan Ranga), 7696000036 (Neha Samar Ranga). No email id is registered with the account. As per Bank records the account was originally opened in the Individual Capacity of Mrs. Neha Samar Ranga on 31.07.2021.The account is operated by the account holder Mrs. Neha Samar Ranga. The following major amounts of money were transferred from above mentioned joint account no. 115110100006348 into the individual account no. 187712050000001 of petitioner:-

Sr. No.	Date	Amount transferred from Joint account no.115110100006348 (Petitioner and her husband) to Individual account no.187712050000001 (Petitioner)
1.	11.08.2021	16 lacs
2.	24.09.2021	58 lacs
3.	01.10.2021	1.20 lacs
4.	02.11.2021	65 lacs
5.	22.11.2021	21 lacs

6.	29.11.2023	4.50 lacs
7.	29.11.2023	5 lacs
8.	30.11.2023	16 lacs
9.	12.12.2023	60,000/-

Copies of the Account Opening Form and bank Statement are annexed herewith as Annexure R-4 (colly.).

Thus, the petitioner being joint account holder in account no. 115110100006348 and Individual account holder of account no. 187712050000001 is fully responsible for the transactions carried out in both the said accounts. The recovery of total embezzled amount of Rs. 5,19,00,000/- (Five Crores and Nineteen lacs) from the petitioner is still pending.”

Raising submission in tandem with the aforesaid reply(s), learned State counsel has iterated that the petitioner cannot contend that her implication is based only on the disclosure statement of a co-accused as the disclosure statement is supported by independent banking material and the money trail showing receipt of approximately ₹5.19 crore in the joint account of the petitioner and her husband. Accordingly, a prayer has been made for the dismissal of the petition in hand.

5. I have heard learned counsel for the rival parties and perused the available record.

6. While adjudicating a prayer for grant of regular bail, the Court is required to undertake a careful assessment of a multitude of factors. The exercise is necessarily contextual and calls for a judicious balancing of the competing considerations. Amongst the relevant considerations are the nature and gravity of the accusation; the severity of the punishment prescribed for the alleged offence; the precise role attributed to the accused; the nature and quality of the material collected during investigation; whether the allegations are specific and individualised or vague and omnibus; the



CRM-M-37645-2026

8

prima facie strength of the prosecution case; the circumstances in which the offence is alleged to have been committed; the antecedents and criminal history, if any, of the accused; the likelihood of the accused absconding or evading the process of law; the possibility of influencing or intimidating witnesses; the likelihood of tampering with or destroying evidence; the propensity, if discernible from the material on record, to commit a similar or further offence; the possibility of repetition of the offence; the stage and progress of investigation or trial; the period of incarceration already undergone; the likelihood of the trial being concluded within a reasonable time; the possibility of the accused being subjected to an unduly prolonged incarceration without adjudication of guilt; and the existence of any special or compelling circumstance which may bear upon the question of release on bail. The Court may also, depending upon the nature of the accusation(s), take into consideration the manner in which the offence is alleged to have been conceived and executed, whether the alleged criminality is individual or forms part of an organised or concerted design, the number of persons allegedly involved, the extent of alleged financial or pecuniary benefit derived, the magnitude of the loss caused, the vulnerability of the victims, the sophistication employed in perpetrating the alleged offence, and whether the accused is alleged to have occupied a position of authority, trust or control which was utilised in the commission of the offence. Equally relevant may be the conduct of the accused before and after registration of the case, including cooperation with the investigation, compliance with previous orders, attempts to evade the process of law, or conduct suggestive of an endeavour to frustrate the investigation or trial.



6.1. The aforesaid considerations acquire a somewhat distinct complexion in cases involving economic offence(s). Such offence(s), though invariably not attended by physical violence, cannot on that account be regarded as less serious. Economic offence(s) are frequently characterised by calculated design, deliberation, sophistication and a conscious abuse of financial, commercial and fiduciary mechanisms. Unlike an offence which may be committed in a moment of passion, impulse or sudden provocation, an economic offence(s) may, indubitably depending upon its factual matrix, involve a preconceived course of conduct, preparation, manipulation of records or transactions, diversion or layering of funds, creation of fictitious documentation, misuse of corporate or fiduciary structures, concealment of the proceeds or coordinated participation of several persons. The absence of physical violence, therefore, cannot by itself dilute the seriousness of the alleged criminality or the potential consequences flowing therefrom.

6.2. This distinction assumes particular significance where the material collected during investigation, *prima facie*, does not merely disclose a general or omnibus allegation against the accused, but contains specific and direct material connecting the individual with the alleged transaction or the *modus operandi* of the offence. Where the accusation is founded upon identifiable transactions, documentary material, financial trails, communications, corporate records, statements, digital evidence or other contemporaneous material which, at the stage of consideration of bail, *prima facie* attributes a definite and active role to the accused, the Court would necessarily be required to approach the prayer for bail with greater circumspection. The Court is not expected, at the stage of bail, to conduct a



CRM-M-37645-2026

10

meticulous appreciation of evidence as would be undertaken at trial; nevertheless, it is equally impermissible to disregard material of substantial probative significance which, on a *prima facie* assessment, demonstrates a direct nexus between the accused and the alleged criminal conduct.

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 assumes significance while considering the prayer for grant of regular bail. The specific allegation against the petitioner is that she and her husband had a joint account in Union Bank of India into which approximately ₹5.19 crore of the allegedly misappropriated public money was transferred. The investigating agency has placed on record the alleged transaction trail showing multiple transfers from accounts connected with the alleged unauthorized and fraudulent accounts of the Municipal Corporation to the joint account of the petitioner and her husband. The prosecution has further alleged that the petitioner was a signatory to the said account and the alleged funds were subsequently utilized/withdrawn. The plea(s) of the petitioner that she was only a joint account holder cannot be accepted as sufficient ground for grant of bail at this stage. The prosecution has alleged that the account was used for receipt of the alleged proceeds of the crime and the petitioner was one of its signatories. In the considered opinion of this Court,

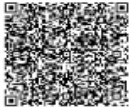


CRM-M-37645-2026

11

whether the petitioner actually operated the account, whether she had knowledge of the source of the money and whether she derived any benefit therefrom, are questions which require appreciation of evidence and cannot be adjudicated upon at the stage of consideration of plea for grant of regular bail. Furthermore, the argument that the petitioner was not named in the FIR cannot, by itself, be accepted as a ground for grant of regular bail. The FIR was initially registered against unknown persons and the investigation was required to identify the persons involved in the alleged conspiracy. The fact that the name of the petitioner has surfaced during investigation does not, by itself, dilute the allegations and the material subsequently collected against her. The prosecution has placed reliance on the banking records and the alleged money trail showing receipt of approximately ₹5.19 crores in the joint account of the petitioner and her husband. The evidentiary value of the same is to be examined during the course of trial. 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 grant of bail. At this stage, the material collected during investigation cannot be brushed aside as vague or baseless.

8. The petitioner is in custody since 06.05.2026 i.e. for a period of about 05 months. This period, by itself, cannot be construed to be sufficient, at least for the *nonce*, to afford benefit of bail to the petitioner on the ground of her long incarceration when considered *vis.-a-vis*. the present stage of trial especially in the backdrop of the nature etc. of the allegations against her. The challan has been filed on 22.06.2026 and charges are yet to be



framed & the custody period has not progressed to such a stage as would warrant interference merely on the ground of the period of incarceration already suffered by the petitioner.

9. Keeping in view the entirety of the factual *milieu* of the *petition in hand*, this Court does not deem it appropriate to afford regular bail to the petitioner at this stage.

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

- (i) The petition in hand is devoid of merits and is hereby dismissed, for the *nonce*.
- (ii) Any observations made and/or submissions noted hereinabove shall not have any effect on merits of the case and the trial Court shall proceed further, in accordance with law, without being influenced with this order.
- (iii) Pending application(s), if any, shall also stand disposed of.

(SUMEET GOEL)
JUDGE

October 05, 2026
Ajay

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