

CRM-M-46592-2023

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

**CRM-M-46592-2023 (O&M)**

**Date of Decision: 4<sup>th</sup> October, 2024**

Bharat Inder Singh Chahal

.....Petitioner

Versus

State of Punjab and others

.....Respondents

**CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE MAHABIR SINGH SINDHU**

**Present:** Mr. Vikram Chaudhri, Senior Advocate with  
Mr. K.S. Nalwa, Advocate,  
for the petitioner.

Mr. ADS Sukhija, Addl. AG, Punjab.

None for respondent No.3.

**MAHABIR SINGH SINDHU, J.**

Present petition has been filed, under Section 438 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (for short, 'Cr.P.C.') seeking pre-arrest bail in FIR No.26 dated 02.08.2023, registered under Section 13(1)(b) read with Section 13(2) of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (as amended in 2018) (for short "Act of 1988"), at Police Station, Vigilance Bureau (for short "Bureau"), District Patiala.

2. The allegations of prosecution, as recorded in the FIR, are reproduced as under:-

*"To SHO, P.S. Vigilance Bureau, Patiala Range, Patiala. From Vigilance Enquiry No. 14/2022 Patiala, it has been found that Bharatinder Singh Chahal remained Media Advisor of Capt. Amarinder Singh, Chief Minister, Punjab from a period of March 2017 till September 2021. During the said tenure he received hefty bribes by adopting corrupt practices. Through said bribe money,*



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*Bharatinder Singh Chahal along with wife Jaswinder Kaur have constructed Dashmesh Luxury Wedding Resort (Alcazar Marriage Palace) on the land already purchased by them, by spending crores of rupees. During the said period, Bharatinder Singh Chahal purchased one plot measuring 2595.36 square yards at Patiala-Nabha Road in his own name and in the name of his wife Jaswinder Kaur and his son Bikramjitinder Singh and raised a 5 storey commercial building over the same. During the said period, Bharatinder Singh Chahal purchased 72 Kanal 14 Marlas of land in Village Kalyan at Patiala-Nabha Road (Near Toll Plaza) in the name of his wife Jaswinder Kaur and his younger son Bikramjitinder Singh Chahal, raised a boundary wall and made preparations for creating a farm house. Smt. Jaswinder Kaur Chahal wife of Bharatinder Singh Chahal made one HP Centre at Sirhind/Mandi Gobindgarh highway. On the said HP Centre, Bharatinder Singh Chahal has spent a lot of amount. During the period of 2017 to 2021, Bharatinder Singh Chahal and his family members made foreign trips to multiple countries on multiple dates and spent lacs of rupees. Money collected by Bharatinder Singh Chahal through corrupt practices has been kept by him in different bank accounts opened in his name and in the name of his family members. On account of the said reason, assessment of income and expenses of Bharatinder Singh Chahal has been made on the basis of documentary evidence pertaining to period from 01.04.2017 to 31.08.2021 and a chart showing income and expenses has been prepared. According to which, Bharatinder Singh and his family members during the above said check period received a total income of Rs.7,85,16,905.08 and during the said period itself, Bharatinder Singh Chahal and his family members have spent Rs.31,79,89,011.89 which was Rs.23,94,72,106.81 more than their income amount and is 304.99% of their total income. Bharatinder Singh Chahal by using his official position amassed various movable/immovable properties by adopting corrupt practices. Therefore, it is found that Bharatinder Singh Chahal, Ex. Media*



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*Advisor of Ex. Chief Minister Punjab has committed offence punishable under Section 13(1)b read with 13(2) of P.C. Act, 1988 as Amended vide PC (Amendment) Act 2018.”*

### **3. CONTENTIONS**

#### **ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONER**

**3.1** Learned Senior counsel contends that petitioner is 75-year-old and has been falsely roped in the present FIR on account of political vendetta.

**3.2** Further contends that the then Coordinate Bench vide order dated 01.06.2023 passed in CRM-M-27997-2023, directed the State of Punjab not to give effect to the Vigilance Inquiry No.14 initiated on 24.11.2022.

Also contends that aforesaid order was challenged by State of Punjab through SLP (Cri.) No. 8131 of 2023, but the same was dismissed on 21.07.2023.

**3.3** Again contends that in pursuance of Notice dated 09.06.2023 issued by the Bureau, petitioner joined the inquiry proceedings on 15.06.2023 wherein, he was handed over a questionnaire, consisting of 44 points and which were duly replied by him on 30.06.2023 along with a list of bank accounts, but the same were completely ignored by the Bureau.

**3.4.** Again contends that Firms of petitioner as well as his family members are independent entities paying income tax, separately and that too, much prior to the check-period i.e. 01.04.2017 to 31.08.2021. All these business entities are regularly paying other taxes as well, including GST, but the same have been completely overlooked by the Bureau.

**3.5** Still further contends that total income of Firm, namely, M/s Dashmesh Luxury Wedding Resorts (for short “Wedding Resorts”), for the check-period, was Rs.6.66 crores approximately without claiming any benefit of



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interest as well as depreciation; the amount of income tax and GST paid have also been ignored by the Bureau.

**3.6** Also contends that on 24.05.2020, petitioner and his family members entered into a Joint Venture Agreement with Jagdish Pal Singh Grewal (father-in-law of petitioner's son) for constructing a Banquet Hall and Restaurant on the commercial plot at Patiala and in pursuance thereof, abovesaid Jagdish Pal Singh Grewal contributed an amount of Rs.1,20,50,000/- through bank transactions, but this aspect of the matter has not been taken into account by the Bureau.

**3.7** Further contends that an amount of Rs.6,73,00,000/- (approximately) was paid to Punjab Urban Development Authority (PUDA) from joint account of petitioner, his wife and son, but again the same has been ignored by the Bureau.

**3.8** Also contends that petitioner and his wife entered into a partnership firm, namely, Wedding Resorts in year 2013-2014; availed loan facility of Rs.7 crore from Punjab & Sind Bank, Patiala on 08.09.2016 for construction of *Alacazar* Marriage Palace. Apart that, they availed a business loan of Rs.2.70 crore from the said Bank on 24.08.2022 for improvement and furnishing of aforesaid Marriage Palace; but all these loan amounts have not been considered by the Bureau while calculating the income of petitioner for the relevant period.

**3.9** Further contends that wife of the petitioner is the sole proprietor of M/s Dashmesh HP Centre (Petrol Pump) which is a "Company Owned Dealer Operated" retail outlet and the pump is owned by the company; but operated by its proprietor, yet the Bureau did not deduct the amount of depreciation and interest from the income of petitioner's wife.



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Again contends that CNG station was installed at the said HP Centre in the year 2019 and the same is being managed by the HPCL.

**3.10** Still further contends that petitioner has duly explained the expenses incurred on his foreign trip(s) as well as that of his family members by way of an additional reply dated 17.07.2023, but the same have not been properly considered by the Bureau.

**3.11** Also contends that petitioner was granted interim bail by the Coordinate Bench on 04.10.2023, and in pursuance thereof, he joined investigation on three occasions i.e., on 28.11.2023; 26.12.2023 & 05.01.2024 and fully cooperated with the investigating officer; thus, there is no reason to deny him the concession of pre-arrest bail, at this stage.

**3.12** Vehemently contends that before registration of the present FIR, petitioner appeared before the Bureau on 15.06.2023 & 17.07.2023 and he was interrogated on both the occasions for 08 hours/05 hours, respectively.

**3.13** Still further contends that alleged Valuation/Assessment of the properties belonging to the petitioner as well as his family members were not prepared by the Certified/Authorized Valuers; rather the same are inflated and prepared in an un-authorized manner by incompetent professionals; thus, having no value in the eyes of law; nor the so-called Valuation/Assessment reports and/or Vigilance inquiry were supplied to the petitioner by the quarter concerned.

**3.14** Lastly contends that petitioner is in the evening of his life; suffering from various ailments and his wife is also suffering from lung cancer, which is at the fourth stage; therefore, circumstances warrant for concession of pre-arrest bail.

**3.15** In support of the above contentions, learned Senior counsel has relied upon the following judicial precedents:



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- i. *Gurbaksh Singh Sibia and others Versus State of Punjab (1980) 2 SCC 565;***
- ii. *Joginder Kumar Versus State of U.P. (1994) 4 SCC 260;***
- iii. *Siddharam Satlingappa Mhetre Versus State of Maharashtra and others 2011 (1) SCC 694;***
- iv. *Sushila Aggarwal and others Versus State (NCT of Delhi) and another (2020) 5 SCC 1;***
- v. *Jaidyal Poddar Versus B.B. Hazra 1974 (1) SCC 3;***
- vi. *M. Krishna Reddy Versus State Deputy Superintendent of Police, Hyderabad (1992) 4 SCC 45;***
- vii. *P.S. Rajya Versus State of Bihar (1996) 9 SCC 1;***
- viii. *Vasant Rao Guhe Versus State of M.P. (2017) 14 SCC 442;***
- ix. *Magathai Ammal (died) through LRs and others Versus Rajeshwari and others (2020) 17 SCC 496; and***
- x. *Susanta Ghosh Versus State of West Bengal, 2024 SCC Online Cal. 792.***

#### ON BEHALF OF THE RESPONDENT

**4.** *Per contra*, learned State counsel submits that on the directions made by Chief Director, Vigilance Bureau, Punjab, the Inquiry No.14 was initiated against the petitioner on 24.11.2022 and the same was entrusted to Senior Superintendent of Police (Vigilance Bureau), Patiala Range, Patiala.

**4.1** Further submits that during the check period, petitioner remained Media Advisor to the then Chief Minister, Punjab and he received hefty amount through corrupt practices while abusing his power and position.



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Again submits that with the ill-gotten money, he purchased various properties in his own name as well as in the name of family members, which are disproportionate to their known sources of income.

During the course of hearing, learned State counsel handed over photocopies of three Assessment/Valuation reports dated 03.02.2023; 19.05.2023 & 17.07.2023 as well as one inquiry report in respect of Vigilance Inquiry No.14 dated 24.11.2022 for perusal of this Court.

**4.2** Further submits that prior to registration of present FIR, petitioner was issued multiple notices by the Bureau on 16.12.2022; 21.12.2022; 27.12.2022; 21.02.2023; 27.02.2023; 06.03.2023; 10.03.2023; 17.03.2023; 29.03.2023; 10.04.2023 & 01.05.2023, but he did not come forward even once for joining the inquiry; rather deliberately evaded the process of law on one pretext or the other; therefore, he has no respect for the rule of law.

**4.3** Also submits that on earlier occasion, petitioner approached this Court by way of CRM-M-27997-2023, wherein, vide order dated 01.06.2023, it was directed by Coordinate Bench that the inquiry (if any) finalized, be not given effect to, but said order was subsequently modified by another Coordinate Bench on 26.07.2023, while observing that State is permitted to conclude the inquiry and to give effect to the same. However, the arrest of the petitioner was stayed for a limited period and later on, after finalization of the inquiry, present FIR was registered and the aforesaid petition was disposed off as having been rendered infructuous on 07.08.2023.

**4.4** Further submits that in compliance of the aforesaid interim direction dated 01.06.2023, petitioner appeared before the Inquiry Officer on 15.06.2023 & 17.07.2023, but thereafter, he never turned up; nor he answered the relevant



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questions asked by the Bureau; thus, petitioner misused the interim concession dated 01.06.2023 (*supra*).

**4.5** Still further submits that petitioner was served with a questionnaire consisting of 44 questions along with Vigilance proforma from serial No.1 to 9, however, he submitted vague reply on 30.06.2023, but did not supply the relevant documents.

**4.6** Again submits that Valuation/Assessment of the properties owned by the petitioner as well as his family members were carried out by investigating agency with the help of government officials as well as other technical officers, including PWD (B&R) Engineers.

**4.7** Specifically submitted that petitioner has amassed assets which are grossly disproportionate to his known sources of income, in a well-organized manner, which need to be thoroughly probed before presentation of the challan and to bring the petitioner to justice.

**4.8** Lastly submitted that although, in the present case, petitioner was granted interim protection by the Coordinate Bench on 04.10.2023, but despite that, he is not cooperating in the matter; rather delaying the investigation on one pretext or the other and misusing the interim concession; hence his custodial interrogation is very much necessary to know the true facts for proper investigation of the case.

**5.** Heard learned counsel for the parties and perused the paper-book.

**6.** It is quite evident that before registration of the FIR in question, Inquiry No.14 was initiated on 24.11.2022 on the direction of Chief Director, Vigilance Bureau, Punjab. In pursuance thereof, a report was submitted by Shri Satpal Sharma, Deputy Superintendent of Police, Vigilance Bureau Unit, Patiala and which was ultimately approved by the Chief Secretary, Punjab. As noticed





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above, the photocopy of inquiry report was produced by learned State counsel during the course of hearing and this Court has gone through the same carefully.

For reference, the concluding part of the aforesaid report reads as under:-

*“Therefore, an estimate of the income and expenditure of the suspect Bharat Inder Singh Chahal has been prepared based on the documentary evidence received, setting the check period from 01.04.2017 to 31.08.2021. According to this, the suspect Bharat Inder Singh Chahal and his family members received a total income of 7,85,16,905.08 rupees during the specified check period, and during the same period, the suspect and his family members were found to have spent a total 31,83,04,761.89 rupees. This shows an excess expenditure of 23,97,87,856.81 rupees, which is 305% of his total income. The suspect Bharat Inder Singh Chahal has misused his government position to acquire movable/immovable properties through corrupt means. Therefore, as per the above report, after obtaining the opinion of the SO Audit and Legal Branch regarding the assets created in excess of income, this report is submitted for the purpose of registering a case against the suspect Bharat Inder Singh Chahal and considering the role of the suspect’s family members during the investigation.”*

7. It is also discernible from Police file that during inquiry proceedings, petitioner was sent various notices, but he did not come forward, except on two occasions and details of notices are as under:-

Dated 16.12.2022; 21.12.2022; 27.12.2022; 21.02.2023;  
27.02.2023; 06.03.2023; 10.03.2023; 17.03.2023;  
29.03.2023; 10.04.2023 & 01.05.2023

Despite aforesaid various notices, petitioner deliberately evaded the process of law and did not cooperate in the matter.



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8. No doubt, the then Coordinate Bench in CRM-M-27997-2023 passed an interim order on 01.06.2023 observing that inquiry be not given effect to, but later on, the interim order was modified on 26.07.2023; thereby permitted the Bureau to conclude the inquiry and give effect to the same as per law. Ultimately, present FIR was registered on 02.08.2023 and the above petition was disposed off as having been rendered infructuous vide order dated 07.08.2023.

9. In the present case also, the Coordinate Bench on 04.10.2023 granted interim protection to the petitioner, but again he did not cooperate with the investigating officer; nor he supplied the desired documents, which are exclusively in his possession; thus, petitioner has misused the concession, without any justification.

10. Although, during the course of hearing, learned Senior counsel seriously disputed the alleged amount of disproportionate assets while showing various documents in the form of replies, but these are the self-serving materials and which, at best, can be adduced in defence during trial and/or, at an appropriate stage; but certainly, the same are not of any help while considering the present bail application.

11. Moreover, respondents in their reply dated 02.10.2023 have again highlighted disproportionate assets alleged against the petitioner in paragraphs No.14, 15 and 16 thereof and relevant part of the same would be as under:-

*“14. ....That the loan for Rs. 7,00,00,000/- has been sanctioned before the Check Period. Furthermore, only Rs.5,01,00,000/- have been disbursed. Rs.67,136,000/- has already been repaid by M/s Dashmesh Luxury Wedding Resorts during the Check Period. That the loan for Rs. 2,70,00,000/- has been availed of after the Check Period. It is denied that the total income of M/s Dashmesh Luxury Wedding Resorts is Rs.6,66,12,3531-. Rs.6,66,12,353/- has*



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*not been withdrawn from the accounts of M/s Dashmesh Luxury Wedding Resorts, during the Check Period, and hence, this amount cannot be considered as the Petitioner's income. Furthermore, Rs.5,96,86,933/- has already been considered as the expenditure incurred (Investment of Capital in the Firm) by the Petitioner, as per ITRs and balance sheets. The same has been considered at Sr. No.58 of the Expenditure Chart.*

*15.....That all documents pertaining to the allotment of the Multi Use Site, issued by PUDA, are in the name of the Petitioner, his wife viz., Jaswinder Kaur Chahal and his son viz., Bikramjit Inder Singh Chahal. That no document pertaining to the purported Joint Venture Agreement and / or any amount spent by Mr. Jagdish Pal Singh Grewal, have been submitted by the Petitioner. With regard to the purported work done on the commercial building after the Check Period, the same can neither be affirmed nor denied, for want of knowledge. It is pertinent to note that the allegations levelled against the Petitioner also pertain to expenditure incurred on the construction of the Multi Use Site; however, the Petitioner has conveniently omitted to refer to the same and / or provide any answers / details with regard to the same.*

*16.....That Jaswinder Kaur Chahal withdrew Rs. 1,46,11,946/- from the bank account of Dashmesh HP Centre. Hence, this amount has been considered as the income of the Petitioner. That the Petitioner has incorrectly referred to Rs.3,02,81,446/- as his income, even though this money has not been withdrawn by the Petitioner / his wife from the bank account of Dashmesh HP Centre, during the Check Period.”*

A bare perusal of the aforesaid extract clearly reveals that loan amount of Rs.7,00,00,000/- which was availed by petitioner on 08.09.2016 for construction of *Alacazar* Marriage Palace, was sanctioned before the check



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period and out of the said amount, only Rs.5,01,00,000/- was disbursed. Further more, an amount of Rs.6,71,36,000/- was repaid by the petitioner to the bank towards the said loan, during the check period.

12. Still further, the police file also reveals that loan amount of Rs.2,70,00,000/-, for improvement and furnishing of aforesaid Marriage Palace, was availed by the petitioner after the check period; thus he cannot take any benefit on that count also.

13. Although, learned Senior counsel vehemently argued that alleged Valuation/ Assessment reports regarding the properties of petitioner as well as of his family are totally biased; but the same is unacceptable for the reasons enumerated by the Bureau in subsequent affidavit dated 03.05.2024 and which are as under:-

- i. The team of Engineers, who prepared the Assessment/Valuation reports, are government officials; thus, duly authorized to carry out the reports in question;
- ii. There is no need of any registration of the government officials before submitting any Valuation/Assessment report; rather, they are well competent for the job assigned to them and moreover, there is no *mala fide* against either of the Engineers by the petitioner;
- iii. Some of the officials were on deputation from PWD (B&R), who were part of the team and their designation and names are as under:-

<i>Name:</i>	<i>Er. Suresh Kumar</i>
<i>Designation</i>	<i>Executive Engineer TT-1</i>
<i>Qualifications</i>	<i>B.E. (Civil), M.Tech Structures</i>

<i>Experience</i>	<i>23 years</i>
<i>In Vigilance Deptt.</i>	<i>From 23.10.2020 till date</i>
<i>No of DA cases assessed (In Vigilance Deptt.)</i>	<i>38</i>

<i>Name:</i>	<i>Er. Amritpal Singh</i>
<i>Designation</i>	<i>SDO.TT-1</i>
<i>Qualifications</i>	<i>B.E. (Civil)</i>
<i>Experience</i>	<i>10 years</i>
<i>In Vigilance Deptt.</i>	<i>From 01.10.2019 till date</i>
<i>No of DA cases assessed (In Vigilance Deptt.)</i>	<i>40</i>

Thus, in view of the above factual position, it cannot be countenanced that Assessment/Valuation reports of the properties owned by petitioner and his family members have been carried out by any unauthorized person and/or in any biased manner.

**14.** Still further, even the income from Wedding Resorts has wrongly been claimed by the petitioner to the tune of Rs.6,66,12,353/- and the same was never withdrawn by him during the check period.

**15.** Apart that, the petitioner has not placed on record any admissible material to substantiate that so-called "Joint Venture Agreement" allegedly entered with Jagdish Pal Singh Grewal was ever executed and/or acted upon or the amount of Rs.1,20,50,000/- was reflected in his income tax returns.

#### **LEGAL PRECEDENTS FROM PETITIONER SIDE:-**

**16.** Although, learned Senior counsel for the petitioner cited various judicial precedents, but the same are not helpful for the following reasons:-

- i. In *Gurbaksh Singh Sibbia's case (supra)*, Hon'ble the Supreme Court while explaining the definition and scope of



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pre-arrest bail, held that anticipatory bail may be granted to a person who is apprehending his arrest in a case, where he is falsely implicated by his rivals. There is no quarrel with the proposition of law. However, in the instant case, there is no question of false implication.

- ii. In *Joginder Kumar's case (supra)*, while delving upon the power and need for arrest, Hon'ble Court observed that arrest cannot be made merely on the basis of suspicion. There must be some reasonable justification in the opinion of the officer effecting the arrest that such arrest is necessary and justified. In the present case, the arrest of petitioner is very much necessary to unearth the actual source of income.
- iii. In *Siddharam Satlingappa Mhetre's case (ibid)*, it was observed by Hon'ble the Supreme Court that if in a particular case, when the conviction rate is admittedly less than 10%, then the Police should be slow in arresting the accused. However, it was also observed that such power is discretionary in nature and to be exercised as per facts and circumstances of each case. The facts of the case in hand do not warrant exercise of such power.
- iv. In *Sushila Aggarwal's case (supra)*, it was held that while considering pre-arrest bail, certain factors such as nature; gravity of the offence; as well as role attributed to the petitioner should be taken into consideration. In the instant case, as the offence committed by the petitioner falls under



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the category of economic offence which disentitles him from the grant of pre-arrest bail.

- v. In ***Jaidayal Poddar and Mangathai Ammal's cases (supra)***, it was held that burden of proving that a particular sale or transaction is *benami* always lies on the person, who asserts it and said burden is to be discharged by leading concrete evidence. The observations are in relation to the civil *lis*, hence distinguishable from the facts of present case.
- vi. In ***M. Krishna Reddy's case (supra)***, it was held that mere acquisition of property would not constitute an offence under Section 13 of P.C Act; rather it is the failure to satisfactorily account for such possession that would attract the provisions of P.C Act. Such a finding was given while deciding the appeal on merits; however, the case in hand is pre-arrest bail where only, *prima facie*, facts are to be seen.
- vii. In ***P.S. Rajya's case (supra)***, the decision was rendered on the facts of the case, which are distinguishable.
- viii. As per ***Vasant Rao Guhe's case (supra)***, it is settled law that in order to hold the accused guilty, prosecution must prove the case beyond reasonable doubt and it is on the discharge of this burden that accused can be held guilty. Again, Hon'ble the Apex Court was dealing with a criminal appeal on its merits; however, the case in hand is a pre-arrest bail; therefore, distinguishable.



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ix. In *Susanta Ghosh's case (supra)*, it was held that fair investigation is the mandate of Articles 14, 21 and 39 of the Constitution. Here, in the case in hand, the investigation is still in progress.

17. Above all, it is settled position of law that the Courts should be slow while exercising power of granting pre-arrest bail in offences affecting the economic fabric as it causes huge loss to the economy of the State and has the significant impact on the society such as economic insecurity, loss of public trust and undermining political structures. As the accusations against the petitioner are very serious in nature, which need to be probed thoroughly; thus, granting him concession of pre-arrest bail shall hinder the fair investigation.

Reference in this regard can be made to *Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy Versus Central Bureau of Investigation (2013) 7 SCC 439* wherein, Hon'ble the Supreme Court has observed as under: -

*“34. Economic Offences constitute a class apart and need to be visited with a different approach in the matter of bail. The economic offences having deep-rooted conspiracies and involving huge loss of public funds need to be viewed seriously and considered as grave offences affecting the economy of the country as a whole and thereby posing serious threat to the financial health of the country.*

*35. While granting bail, the Court has to keep in mind the nature of accusations, 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 interest of the public/State and other similar considerations.”*





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18. It is not in dispute that petitioner remained Media Advisor of the then Chief Minister, Punjab from 01.04.2017 to 31.08.2021 and present FIR was registered on 02.08.2023 i.e., within two years of his demitting the office; thus, the plea of old age at the instance of petitioner would not be convincing when he remained posted on such an important assignment till the age of 72 years.

19. There is no quarrel that petitioner was granted interim protection by the Coordinate Bench on 04.10.2023, but despite repeated asking by the Bureau, including two written notices, petitioner did not cooperate with the investigating officer; nor he supplied the relevant documents, which are exclusively in his possession; thus, petitioner has misused the interim concession and as such, he cannot take any benefit on that count as well.

20. From the above, it appears that petitioner's income during the check period was Rs.7,85,16,905.08/-; whereas, his expenditures are assessed to the tune of Rs.31,79,89,011.89/-; hence, *prima facie*, he is in possession of disproportionate assets to the known sources of income; rather he accumulated the same while abusing his power and position as Media Advisor to the then Chief Minister, Punjab.

21. In view of the above, the arrest of the petitioner is very much necessary to interrogate him for eliciting the actual source of disproportionate assets and to complete the investigation in a fair and transparent manner.

22. Consequently, there is no option, except to dismiss the petition.

23. Ordered accordingly.

24. However, it is clarified that observations, made here-in-above, be not construed as an expression of opinion on merits of the case; rather the same are confined only to decide the present bail application.



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25. Photocopies of the Assessment/Valuation reports/ Inquiry Report be returned to learned State counsel, forthwith.

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

4<sup>th</sup> October, 2024

SN

(MAHABIR SINGH SINDHU)  
JUDGE

Whether speaking/reasoned  
Whether reportable

Yes/No  
Yes/No