

2026:PHHC:022794



CRM-M-3013-2026(O&M) 1

**207 IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA
AT CHANDIGARH**

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**CRM-M-3013-2026(O&M)
Date of Decision : 13.02.2026**

Manpreet Kaur @ MuskanPetitioner

VERSUS

State of Punjab and anotherRespondents

CORAM : HON'BLE MS. JUSTICE MANDEEP PANNU

Present: Mr. Lakshay Bector, Advocate for the petitioner.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Wadhwa, DAG, Punjab

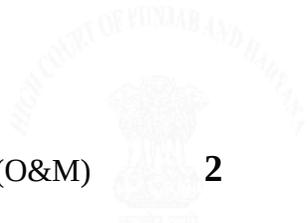
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MANDEEP PANNU J. (Oral)

This is first petition under Section 482 of the B.N.S.S. for grant of anticipatory bail to the petitioner in FIR No. 174 dated 20.08.2024, registered under Section 420 of the IPC, 1860 and Section 24 of the Immigration Act at Police Station Sadar Ludhiana, District Ludhiana.

Status report by way of affidavit of Harjinder Singh, PPS, Assistant Commissioner of Police (South), Ludhiana on behalf of respondent no.1 has been filed in the Court today and the same is taken on record.

The present FIR has been registered on the complaint of Rajni Bala, who alleged that the petitioner–accused induced her to go to England on a 5-year work permit visa and, on that pretext, obtained a total sum of ₹1,12,500/-. It is alleged that the accused first collected copies of the complainant’s passport, Aadhaar card, photographs and



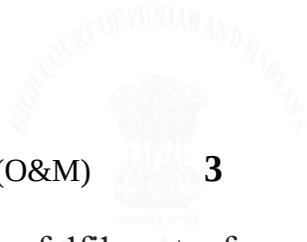
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Cyprus visa on 22.06.2023. Thereafter, she received ₹25,000/- on 23.06.2023, ₹25,000/- on 24.06.2023, ₹50,000/- on 30.06.2023 and ₹12,500/- on 06.07.2023 through Google Pay. The accused also got the medical examination of the complainant conducted at a healthcare diagnostic lab.

However, subsequently, the accused allegedly stopped responding to the complainant's calls and neither arranged the promised visa nor returned the money, thereby allegedly cheating her. It is further the case of the prosecution that five other FIRs of similar nature are already registered against the petitioner at different police stations in Ludhiana, pertaining to allegations of immigration-related cheating.

Learned counsel for the petitioner has contended that the petitioner has been falsely implicated in the present case and that a bare perusal of the FIR would show that no offence is made out against her. It is argued that the allegations are exaggerated and have been levelled only with a view to pressurize the petitioner. The petitioner is not engaged in any immigration business and, in fact, it is her husband, who is running such business. The petitioner is alleged to have received the amount only on behalf of her husband and had no independent role in the alleged transaction.

It is further submitted that the essential ingredients of Section 420 IPC are not attracted, as there was no fraudulent or dishonest intention on the part of the petitioner from the very inception of the transaction. At best, the dispute is of a civil nature



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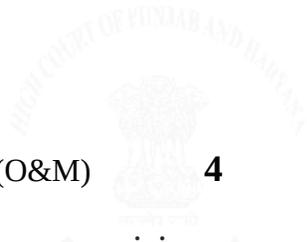
arising out of non-fulfilment of an alleged promise regarding visa processing. It is also contended that the allegations are based upon documentary evidence and nothing is to be recovered from the petitioner; therefore, her custodial interrogation is not required.

Learned counsel has further argued that out of the total alleged amount of ₹1,12,500/-, the petitioner has already paid ₹1,00,000/- to the complainant, which shows her bona fides and negates any dishonest intention. It is also contended that the petitioner has not been declared a proclaimed offender in any case and is ready to join investigation and cooperate with the investigating agency.

On these grounds, it has been prayed that the petitioner be granted the concession of anticipatory bail.

Learned State counsel has vehemently opposed the present anticipatory bail application and submitted that serious and specific allegations have been levelled against the petitioner. It is contended that the petitioner projected herself as competent to arrange a five-year work permit visa for England and induced the complainant, Rajni Bala, to part with a substantial amount of ₹1,12,500/- through digital transactions on different dates. The entire payment trail, as per the investigation, stands credited into the account of the petitioner through Google Pay.

It is further submitted that the petitioner not only received the said amount but also actively collected and retained the personal and travel documents of the complainant, including passport copy and other identification documents, and got her medical examination



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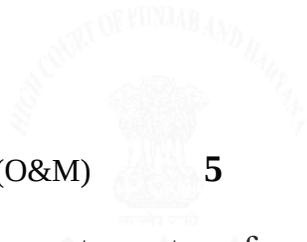
conducted, thereby exercising complete control over the process. Despite receiving the money, the petitioner failed to procure any visa or lawful documentation and deliberately avoided communication with the complainant.

Learned State counsel has further argued that during verification and preliminary inquiry, it surfaced that the petitioner was indulging in immigration-related activities without possessing any valid licence or statutory authorization under the Immigration laws. The investigation has also revealed that multiple FIRs of similar nature are already registered against the petitioner, demonstrating a pattern of conduct and habitual involvement in immigration fraud cases.

It is contended that the role of the petitioner is central, direct and unequivocal, and the allegations disclose dishonest intention from the very inception. The custodial interrogation of the petitioner is stated to be necessary to unearth the larger conspiracy, trace other victims, and recover documents and electronic evidence. Therefore, it is prayed that the anticipatory bail application be dismissed.

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

A bare perusal of the FIR and the material collected during investigation prima facie reveals that the petitioner induced the complainant to part with a sum of ₹1,12,500/- on the pretext of arranging a five-year work permit visa for England. The payment trail

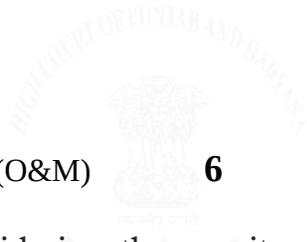


reflects that the amount was transferred digitally and credited into the petitioner's account. The petitioner is also alleged to have collected and retained the complainant's personal and travel documents and arranged her medical examination, thereby actively participating in and controlling the entire process.

The conduct attributed to the petitioner-receiving money, retaining documents, failing to procure any visa, and thereafter avoiding communication-prima facie indicates dishonest intention from the inception. The allegations are not vague or omnibus but are supported by documentary and electronic evidence collected during investigation.

Furthermore, the status report indicates that the petitioner is allegedly involved in other cases of similar nature, which prima facie suggests a systematic modus operandi of defrauding innocent persons desirous of going abroad. The accusations are serious in nature and pertain to cheating and unlawful engagement in immigration activities without licence under Section 24 of the Immigration Act.

The argument that the petitioner has refunded ₹1,00,000/- out of the disputed amount does not, at this stage, dilute the gravity of the allegations, particularly when the offence under Section 420 IPC hinges upon fraudulent and dishonest inducement at the inception. Partial repayment, if any, cannot by itself efface the criminality alleged.



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Considering the gravity of the accusations, the specific and active role attributed to the petitioner, the nature of evidence collected, and the necessity of custodial interrogation for effective investigation, this Court does not find it to be a fit case for grant of anticipatory bail.

Accordingly, the present petition seeking anticipatory bail is hereby dismissed.

Nothing observed hereinabove shall be construed as an expression on the merits of the case.

Pending application(s), if any, is/are disposed of.

February 13, 2026
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(MANDEEP PANNU)
JUDGE

Whether speaking/non-speaking : Speaking
Whether reportable : Yes/No