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IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB & HARYANA AT
CHANDIGARH

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CRM-M No.10310 of 2026
Date of decision: 14.07.2026

Rajiv Kumar Sood ... Petitioner

Vs.

State of Punjab ... Respondent

CORAM: HON'BLE MRS. JUSTICE MANISHA BATRA

Present:- Mr. G.S. Jagpal, Advocate,
for the petitioner.

Ms. Sakshi Bakshi, AAG, Punjab,
for the respondent-State.

Ms. Anmol Thakur, Advocate and
Mr. Deepak Arora, Advocate,
for the complainant.

MANISHA BATRA, J. (Oral)

1. The present petition has been filed by the petitioner under Section 483 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 (for short ‘BNSS’) seeking regular bail in the FIR mentioned below:-

FIR No.	Dated	Police Station	Sections
11	30.11.2024	Economic Offence Wing, Punjab Vigilance Bureau, District Ludhiana	384, 420, 465, 467, 468 and 120-B of IPC

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2. As per the allegations, a complaint was received at Vigilance Bureau, Economic Wing, Ludhiana which was enquired into and it was revealed that the accused Satnam Singh Dhawan in connivance with the accused Bhupinder Punj and some other persons used to blackmail the officials posted in the office of Regional Transport Authority (RTA), Ludhiana by extending threats to them to lodge complaints against them with the Vigilance Department and also used to coerce such officials to carry out the task as desired by them, by extorting money from the public persons as well as officials of RTA. During the course of enquiry, officials of RTA produced several screenshots and Whatsapp messages verifying that threats were extended to them by the accused Satnam Singh Dhawan and other co-accused.

3. Investigation proceedings were initiated. During the course of investigation, it transpired that the petitioner was an active member in the racket run by accused Satnam Singh and used to get the work done from the office of RTA by blackmailing the concerned officials/officers and by extorting money. He was nominated as an accused and was arrested on 10.09.2025. The co-accused was also arrested. Investigation now stands completed.

4. It is argued by learned counsel for the petitioner that he has been implicated in this case by concocting a false story to the effect that he had been sent by co-accused Satnam Dhawan to Dinesh Bansal for

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receiving a sum of Rs.30,000/- from him. However, there is no material to connect him with the commission of subject offences. He is a specially abled person suffering from 65% locomotor disability. He is in custody since 10.09.2025. Investigation now stands concluded. His further incarceration would not serve any useful purpose. His antecedents are clean. The co-accused Satnam Singh Dhawan has been extended benefit of bail. On parity, he too deserves to be extended the same benefit. It is, thus, argued that the petition deserves to be allowed.

5. Per contra, learned State counsel assisted by learned counsel for the complainant and while relying upon the status report, has argued that the allegations against the petitioner are serious in nature. He is accused of coercing and blackmailing officials/employees of RTO offices in Punjab and extracting money from them, thereby exploiting public trust for personal enrichment. There are chances of his committing similar offences, if extended benefit of bail. It is thus, urged that the petition does not deserve to be allowed.

6. This Court has heard the rival submissions made by learned counsel for the parties at considerable length.

7. The allegations against the petitioner make out a prima facie case for commission of subject offences against him. However, he has been in custody since 10.09.2025. The investigation has been concluded. Further incarceration of the petitioner is not going to serve any fruitful

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purpose. The chances of conclusion of the trial in the near future are bleak. The well settled proposition of law is that bail is the rule and jail is an exception. Further, pre-trial incarceration should not be replica of post-conviction sentencing. The object of the jail is to secure appearance of the accused during trial, and it cannot be preventive or punitive. In view of the above discussion, this Court is of the opinion that a case is made out for grant of bail to the petitioner at this stage. Accordingly, the petition is allowed and the petitioner is ordered to be released on bail subject to his furnishing personal as well as surety bonds to the satisfaction of the learned trial Court/Chief Judicial Magistrate/Duty Magistrate concerned.

8. It is, however, clarified that the observations made above shall not be construed as an expression of opinion of this Court on the merits of the case and shall not influence the outcome of the trial in any manner.

14.07.2026
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(MANISHA BATRA)
JUDGE

Whether speaking/reasoned
Whether reportable

Yes/No
Yes/No