

**CRM-M-44532-2025 and other connected cases****1****IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA
AT CHANDIGARH****114****CRM-M-44532-2025****Sahil Chhabra****.....Petitioner****Versus****State of Punjab and another
114-2****.....Respondents****CRM-M-46257-2025****Jatinder Kumar Chawla****.....Petitioner****Versus****State of Punjab
114-3****.....Respondents****CRM-M-52005-2025****Baldev Raj Chhabra****.....Petitioner****Versus****State of Punjab and anr****.....Respondents****Decided on: 24.03.2026****CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE SANJAY VASHISTH**

Present: Mr. S.S. Ranghi, Sr. Advocate with
Mr. K.K. Dhillon, Advocate
Ms. Gulraz Kohli, Advocate for the petitioner(s)
(in CRM-M-44532-2025 and CRM-M-52005-2025)

Mr. Naveen Bawa, Advocate
for the petitioner
(in CRM-M-46257-2025).

Mr. Neeraj Madaan, Sr, DAG, Punjab.

Mr. Nikhil Chopra, Advocate for respondent No.2.

SANJAY VASHISTH, J.

1. By way of this common order all the aforementioned
petitions are being disposed of.

**CRM-M-44532-2025 and other connected cases****2**

2. Present petitions have been filed under Section 482 of the BNSS, 2023 (earlier Section 438 Cr.P.C.), for grant of anticipatory bail to the petitioners, who have been booked in a criminal case arising out of First Information Report, as detailed hereunder:-

Name & age of Petitioner (s)	FIR No.	Date	Section(s)	Police Station	District
i) Sahil Chhabra	126	10.07.2025	406, 420 and 120-B IPC	Model Towan	Police Commissionerate, Ludhiana
ii)Jatinder Kumar Chawla					
Iii) Baldev Raj Chabbra					

3. In compliance with the order dated 20.11.2025, the report dated 19.01.2026 forwarded by the learned District and Sessions Judge, Ludhiana, has been perused, and this Court is satisfied no further directions are required to be issued.

4. After hearing learned counsel for the petitioner in CRM-M-44532-2025, the following was recorded by the co-ordinate Bench of this Court on 18.08.2025:

“ Learned counsel for the petitioner contends that even from the prosecution case, it is clearly evident that a financial transaction has been illegally converted into a criminal offence. Even till date, the complainant has not availed the legal remedy to file a suit for recovery and the present FIR is a colourable exercise of power to convert a civil suit in a criminal offence.

Notice of motion.

On the asking of Court, Mr. M.S. Bajwa, DAG, Punjab accepts notice on behalf of the respondent-State, while Mr.Nikhil

**CRM-M-44532-2025 and other connected cases****3**

K. Chopra, Advocate has put in appearance on behalf of respondent No.2.

Heard.

In the meantime, the petitioner is directed to join the investigation. In the event of arrest, he shall be released on interim bail to the satisfaction of arresting/investigating officer subject to the conditions envisaged under Section 438 (2) Cr.P.C./482 (2) of BNSS, 2023.

With the consent of both the parties, the matter is referred to the Mediation and Conciliation Centre of this Court and the parties are directed to appear before it on 26.08.2025.

List on 23.09.2025 ”

Similarly, in CRM-M-46257-2025, the following was recorded by this Court on 25.08.2025:

“1.xxx

2. Learned counsel for the petitioner contends that there is no evidence available with the complainant to substantiate the allegation regarding the borrowing of a huge amount of Rs.1,90,00,000/- (Rupees One Crore Ninety Lakhs) from Baljit Singh (father of the complainant).

It is submitted that these allegations have been raised by the complainant, Sumeet Singh, only after the demise of his father, whereas during his lifetime, no complaint was ever made by Baljit Singh alleging that the accused persons had failed to return the borrowed amount or that he had been cheated or defrauded by them. Moreover, complaint is devoid of any specific details such as the time, place, or date of the alleged borrowing. The source of the alleged amount is also not explained by the complainant.

3. Counsel for the petitioner further submits that the matter clearly pertains to a financial dispute, and present criminal case has been registered, merely to exert pressure on the petitioner and other co-accused. It is also pointed out that complainant has

**CRM-M-44532-2025 and other connected cases****4**

not availed of any remedy available under civil law, such as filing a suit for recovery of the alleged amount. However, petitioner is ready to join the investigation and fully cooperate, if protected from arrest by this Court. Thus, prays for grant of concession of anticipatory bail to the petitioner in the present case.

4. *Additionally, counsel for the petitioner contends that the dispute has already been referred to the Mediation and Conciliation Centre of this Court, vide order dated 18.08.2025 passed in CRM-M-44532-2025.*

5. *Notice of motion.*

6. *On advance notice, Mr. Neeraj Madaan, Sr. DAG, Punjab, puts in appearance on behalf of the respondent - State, and Mr. Nikhil Chopra, Advocate, puts in appearance on behalf of the complainant, and submits that dispute in the present case can also be referred to the Mediation and Conciliation Centre of this Court for amicable settlement.*

7. *Since, the dispute has already been referred to the Mediation and Conciliation Centre of this Court in CRM-M-44532-2025, parties are required to appear before the Mediation and Conciliation Centre of this Court on 26.08.2025.*

8. *Meanwhile, the petitioner is directed to join the investigation as and when required to do so by the Investigating Agency. In the event of his arrest, the petitioner shall be released on ad-interim bail, subject to his furnishing bail bonds to the satisfaction of the Arresting Officer. The petitioner shall also be abide by all the conditions laid down under Section 482(2) of BNSS, 2023 (earlier Section 438(2) Cr.P.C.).*

9. *Besides, it is directed that petitioner would hand over his passport to the Investigating Agency or to Court concerned, if he possesses. Otherwise, would submit an affidavit, disclosing the fact that he does not possess any passport.*

It is also directed that before leaving country any time during trial, petitioner would seek prior permission of the Court.

**CRM-M-44532-2025 and other connected cases****5**

10. *Adjourned to 23.09.2025, awaiting report.
To be heard along with CRM-M-44532-2025.*

Further, in CRM-M-52005-2025, the following was recorded
by this Court on 16.09.2025:

“1. xxx

2. *Learned counsel for the petitioner contends that there is no evidence available with the complainant to substantiate the allegation regarding the borrowing of a huge amount of Rs.1,90,00,000/- (Rupees One Crore Ninety Lakhs) from Baljit Singh (father of the complainant).*

It is submitted that these allegations have been raised by the complainant, Sumeet Singh, only after the demise of his father, whereas during his lifetime, no complaint was ever made by Baljit Singh alleging that the accused persons had failed to return the borrowed amount or that he had been cheated or defrauded by them. Moreover, complaint is devoid of any specific details such as the time, place, or date of the alleged borrowing. The source of the alleged amount is also not explained by the complainant.

3. *Counsel for the petitioner further submits that the matter clearly pertains to a financial dispute, and present criminal case has been registered, merely to exert pressure on the petitioner and other co-accused. It is also pointed out that complainant has not availed of any remedy available under civil law, such as filing a suit for recovery of the alleged amount. However, petitioner is ready to join the investigation and fully cooperate, if protected from arrest by this Court. Thus, prays for grant of concession of anticipatory bail to the petitioner in the present case.*

4. *Additionally, counsel for the petitioner contends that the dispute has already been referred to the Mediation and Conciliation Centre of this Court, vide order dated 18.08.2025 passed in CRM-M-44532-2025.*

5. *Notice of motion.*

**CRM-M-44532-2025 and other connected cases****6**

6. *On advance notice, Mr. Neeraj Madaan, Sr. DAG, Punjab, puts in appearance on behalf of the respondent - State, and Mr. Nikhil Chopra, Advocate, puts in appearance on behalf of the complainant (through VC mode).*

7. *Adjourned to 23.09.2025.*

To be heard along with CRM-M-44532-2025.

8. *Meanwhile, the petitioner is directed to join the investigation as and when required to do so by the Investigating Agency. In the event of his arrest, the petitioner shall be released on ad-interim bail, subject to his furnishing bail bonds to the satisfaction of the Arresting Officer. The petitioner shall also be abide by all the conditions laid down under Section 482(2) of BNSS, 2023 (earlier Section 438(2) Cr.P.C.).*

9. *Besides, it is directed that petitioner would hand over his passport to the Investigating Agency or to Court concerned, if he possesses. Otherwise, would submit an affidavit, disclosing the fact that he does not possess any passport.*

It is also directed that before leaving country any time during trial, petitioner would seek prior permission of the Court.”

4. The primary contention of learned counsel representing the petitioner(s) is that a financial transaction has been illegally converted into a criminal offence, and that even till date the remedy available under civil law has not been availed by the complainant. It is thus argued that the registration of the FIR amounts to a colourable exercise of power to convert a civil dispute into a criminal offence, a contention which was acknowledged by this Court while issuing notice on 18.08.2025.

During the pendency of the present petitions, the matter was referred to the Mediation and Conciliation Centre of this Court; however, it remained unsettled and, on that account, the matter has been listed again for consideration.

**CRM-M-44532-2025 and other connected cases****7**

5. It is an admitted position that, in view of the interim directions issued by this Court vide orders dated 18.08.2025, 25.08.2025, and 16.09.2025 passed in CRM-M-44532-2025, CRM-M-46257-2025 and CRM-M-52005-2025 respectively, petitioners have already joined the investigation.

6. In this regard, learned State counsel also refers to the status report filed in CRM-M-52005-2025, wherein, in paragraph Nos. 5 and 6, it has been made clear that all the three petitioners have joined the investigation and were thereafter released on interim bail. For reference, paragraphs Nos. 5 and 6 read as under:

“5. That pursuant to the order dated 16.09.2025 passed by this Hon' ble High Court, the present petitioner duly joined investigation on 19.09.2025, whereupon he was released on interim bail in terms of the directions of this Hon'ble High Court.

6. That it is further submitted that the other accused, namely Sahil Chhabra and Jatinder Chawla, were also granted the concession of interim anticipatory bail by this Hon'ble High Court vide orders dated 18.08.2025 and 25.08.2025 respectively. Pursuant thereto, accused Sahil Chhabra joined the investigation on 22.08.2025 and was released on interim bail as per the directions of this Hon'ble High Court, and, accused Jatinder Chawla joined the investigation on 03.09.2025 and was released on onetrin bail as per the directions of this Hon'ble High Court. Furthermore, accused Sham Chhabra still remains to be arrested. It is further submitted that the investigation in the present case is ongoing.”

7. In view of the submissions already acknowledged by the co-ordinate Bench of this Court, and also for the reason that, in compliance with the directions issued by this Court, petitioners have joined the

**CRM-M-44532-2025 and other connected cases****8**

investigation, this Court does not find any substantial reason to subject the petitioners to custodial interrogation. However, the allegations levelled in the FIR are required to be appreciated only after adducing a complete set of evidence.

Accordingly, orders dated 18.08.2025, 25.08.2025, and 16.09.2025 passed in CRM-M-44532-2025, CRM-M-46257-2025, and CRM-M-52005-2025 respectively are hereby made absolute. Present petitions stand allowed.

It is made clear that petitioners shall continue to join the investigation as and when required to do so and abide by all the terms and conditions laid down under Section 482(2) of BNSS, 2023.

8. However, it is clarified that in case the passport or an affidavit regarding non-possession of a passport, if they do not possess, is not submitted to the Investigating Agency or the Court concerned within a period of one week from today, the present order shall be deemed to be inoperative and the Investigating Officer shall be at liberty to proceed with the arrest of the petitioners.

9. Accordingly, petitions stand disposed of.

10. A photocopy of this order be placed on the files of other connected cases.

(SANJAY VASHISTH)
JUDGE

24.03.2026
Rashmi

Whether Speaking/Reasoned: **YES/NO**
Whether Reportable: **YES/NO**