

News

How did the reporter enter the jail to interview Lawrence Bishnoi? The Supreme Court requests that Punjab DSP be discharged.



Despite having nothing to do with the interview, the former DSP had petitioned the highest court to stop coercive action against him.

A petition filed by former Punjab Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Gursher Singh Sandhu about the interview of incarcerated gangster Lawrence Bishnoi was rejected as withdrawn by the Supreme Court on June 24. **State of Punjab & Anr. v. Gursher Singh Sandhu**

Under Section 41A of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), Sandhu had contested the notices' issuance.

Sandhu's writ case, which also sought to have proceedings related to the same incident quashed, was previously listed before the Punjab and Haryana High Court on July 3, according to a bench of **Justices KV Viswanathan and N Kotiswar Singh**.

Justice Viswanathan questioned how the journalist got to Bishnoi within the jail during the hearing. The night before the interview, Sandhu was in command, he added.

Despite not being listed as an offender in the FIR, Sandhu had argued that he was being summoned under Section 41A CrPC.

Even though the journalist who recorded the interview had obtained temporary protection from the Supreme Court, his attorney, Senior Advocate **Vikram Chaudhri**, argued that the notification was still being sent. He maintained that Sandhu was being singled out and that he never had access to Bishnoi.

The controversy stems from television interviews that ABP Sanjha aired in March 2023 when Lawrence Bishnoi, the accused in the Sidhu Moosewala murder case, was in detention. A Special Investigation Team (SIT) was established to look into the circumstances of the interview after the Punjab and Haryana High Court took suo motu cognizance of mobile phone use in jails after the broadcast.

Later, the SIT discovered that the initial interview took place on the night between September 3 and 4, 2022, while Bishnoi was being held by the Kharar-based Crime Investigation Agency (CIA). According to reports, the second interview happened in a jail in Rajasthan. The Punjab government initiated departmental action and suspended seven police personnel, including Sandhu, as a result of the investigation.

The High Court noted in November 2024 that Punjab Police personnel had established a studio-like setting for the interrogation in addition to permitting the use of technological gadgets within the jail. The State was cautioned against using lower-ranking employees as scapegoats and instructed to take strong measures against high officers proven to be culpable.

Sandhu challenged his dismissal in January of this year, and the High Court requested the State's evidence connecting him to the crime in a sealed cover in a subsequent judgment dated June 4. The order pointed out that no explanation was given in the general journal

entry documenting his transference as an accused.

Chaudhri requested the top court to at least shield Sandhu from coercive action in the interim when the bench cited the High Court petition's pending status. The bench, however, chose not to step in at this point and stated in its ruling that the petition was dismissed as withdrawn, leaving the parties free to seek remedies in the High Court.

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