

News

After a sting op on female foeticide, the Madhya Pradesh High Court provides relief to journalists accused of extortion.



The Court granted anticipatory bail to Vinay Arora and bail to Rajni, both involved with Tehelka. The Court observed that the FIR was only filed after senior government officials received the sting op videos.

Indore Bench of the Madhya Pradesh High Court

Vinay Arora, a journalist from Tehelka who is accused of extortion in relation to a sting operation that allegedly revealed illegal prenatal **sex determination, illegal abortions, and female foeticide in Dewas, was granted anticipatory bail by the Madhya Pradesh High Court on Thursday [Vinay Arora v. State of Madhya Pradesh]. A few days prior, on June 25, the Court granted bail to Rajni, another journalist connected to the same sting operation and facing extortion.**

Both rulings were made by Justice Pavan Kumar Dwivedi who gave them relief after finding that the sting films had already been shared with senior government personnel before the FIR alleging extortion was registered. **"The video of the Sting Operation was already sent to the Commissioner, Health Department, Madhya Pradesh, Chairperson of the NHRC, DGP of Madhya Pradesh, and CM&HO, Dewas on April 6, 2026 (Annexure A/2), and on April 6, 2026, it was sent to CMHO, Dewas.** This Court is inclined to allow this application only after that FIR was registered on April 7, 2026, the Court noted in its order granting Vinay Arora pre-arrest bail.

When Rajni's release on bail was ordered, similar observations were made.

The case came from a **FIR registered at Kotwali Police Station, stating that Arora, Rajni and others planned to extort money from the complainant using tapes obtained during a sting operation.**

The FIR was registered under Sections 308(5) and 308(6) (extortion), Section 61(2) (criminal conspiracy) and Section 3(5) (common intention) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).

The accused journalists, who are associated with Tehelka Digital News, had conducted sting operations exposing alleged illegal prenatal sex determination, unlawful abortions and female foeticide that were being carried out in violation of the **Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques Act, 1994 (PCPNDT Act) and the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971 (MTP Act).**

Rajni was detained in connection with the crime on April 13. She eventually sought the High Court seeking bail.

Meanwhile, a trial court rejected Vinay Arora's anticipatory **bail motion on May 11, leading him to approach the High Court as well for relief.**

The journalists' attorney stated that the tapes of the sting operation had been shared with the authorities before the FIR was launched.

They argued that the extortion prosecution was a reprisal after the sting operation revealed the alleged illicit activity. They also noted that there could be no possibility of extortion because the videos had already been sent to the authorities.

The State objected to the plea, claiming that the accusations were grave and that the accused had recorded films during the sting operation in an attempt to blackmail the complainant.

The High Court ultimately issued two separate rulings granting relief to both journalists without addressing the case's merits.

The Court ordered on July 2 that Arora be freed on anticipatory bail upon providing a personal bond of ₹50,000 and one solvent surety in the case of his arrest.

Rajni's release on bail was mandated by the Court's previous June 25 judgment, subject to her providing a personal bond of ₹1 lakh with one solvent surety and attending trial sessions on a regular basis.

The journalists were represented by advocate Aman Malviya.

Hemant Sharma and Surendra Singh Alawa, government advocates, represented the State.