



Shri Ajay Kumar Mehta, (9814646309)
 # C-118, East Mohan Nagar,
 Chamrang Road, Amritsar.

....Appellant

Versus

Public Information Officer,
 O/o Naib Tehsildar, Majri,
 Tehsil Kharar, District S.A.S Nagar (Mohal).

Public Information Officer,
 O/o Chief Secretary,
 Government of Punjab,
 Chandigarh.

First Appellate Authority,
 O/o Chief Secretary,
 Government of Punjab,
 Chandigarh.

Public Information Officer,
 O/o Deputy Commissioner,
 Amritsar.

Public Information Officer,
 O/o Sub – Divisional Magistrate,
 Amritsar – 1, Amritsar.

Public Information Officer,
 O/o Municipal Corporation,
 Amritsar.

Public Information Officer,
 O/o Senior Superintendent of Police,
 Vigilance Bureau, Amritsar.

Public Information Officer,
 O/o Commissioner,
 Municipal Corporation, Amritsar.

First Appellate Authority,
 O/o Commissioner,
 Municipal Corporation, Amritsar.

Public Information Officer,
 O/o Improvement Trust,
 AMRITSAR.

First Appellate Authority
 O/o Improvement Trust,
 AMRITSAR.

First Appellate Authority
 O/o Director, Vigilance Bureau, Punjab
 Vigilance Bhawan, Sector-68,
 S.A.S. Nagar (Mohali).

First Appellate Authority,
 O/o Deputy Commissioner,
 Amritsar.

First Appellate Authority
 O/o Tehsildar, Tehsil Kharar,
 District S.A.S Nagar (Mohal).

....Respondents

APPEAL CASE NO. 4165,4383,34,512 OF 2022,
140,5280,1627,3815,123,124,125,1144,1145,1225,1144,1145,1225,1841,1842,2018,4620,4659
OF 2021

Present: Appellant: Sh. Ajay Kumar Mehta
Respondent: Absent

ORDER:

1. The brief facts of the case necessary to be noted for proper adjudication of the present bunch of Second Appeals are stated herein below. The Appellant before this Commission has filed numerous Second Appeals under the RTI Act seeking wide range of information, against various Public Authorities and Government Departments which are pending for adjudication before various coordinate Benches of this Commission. Out of all such cases filed by the Appellant before this Commission, nineteen have been listed before this Bench and a few of them has been heard by other bench and request of the appellant has been transferred to the undersigned bench. All the cases are being taken up together and accordingly being disposed of by way of the present common Judgment. The details of the said cases are mentioned above.
2. At the time of the hearing of the aforesaid bunch of Second Appeals the appellant Sh. Ajay Kumar Mehta appeared clueless in respect of the nuances of the RTI Act and was not well aware of the facts of the appeals filed by him. Viewing this, the undersigned bench advised the appellant that, "prior to the hearing he should be at least prepared with all the requisite documents sequentially for smooth and effective court proceedings ". Moreover he was also given some time by the court to arrange documents in the sequence in which the cases are list up today. On this, after a few minutes the appellant Sh. Ajay Kumar Mehta turned up with a written submission, therein he stated that he wants to get all his cases transfer to another bench and he further added that, he wants so, as he feels that no fair justice will be done before this bench of the commission.
After this, the appellant abused Right to Information and also used insinuate and defamatory language against the State Information Commissioners repeatedly and also made allegations on the conduct of the Ld. SICs.
3. Keeping in view the facts of the case and circumstances described in the present appeal do indicate that the taking note from the written submission of the appellant to transfer his all the cases to some another bench, this Court is view that; it is a clear cut case of forum shopping. Such practice is against the judicial discipline. The act of bench-hunting or bench shopping or bench-avoiding is not permissible under the law. No litigant can play hide and seek with the courts or adopt pick and choose. It is also pertinent to mention here that:-

The Supreme Court in the case of Fatehchand Himmatlal and others vs State of Maharashtra and others, (1977) 2 SCC 670 has held that it is important, by comity of the **Bench** and the Bar, to conserve judicial time in the name of public justice.

*The Supreme Court has time and again deprecated the practice of **bench-hunting**, **bench-hopping** and **bench-avoiding**. In the case of Subrata Roy Sahara Vs. Union of India and others,*

*(2014) 8 SCC 470 has held that any act of **bench-hunting**, **bench-hopping** and **bench-avoiding** cannot be allowed. The **benchmark**, that justice must not only be done but should also appear to be done, has to be preserved at all costs. Any attempt for **bench-hunting**, **bench-hopping** and **bench-avoiding** needs to be strongly repulsed*

In P. Jayasankar vs. Chief Secretary to Government of Tamilnadu and Gunaseelan, I.P.S. decided by Madras High Court on 18.2.2013, it was held that

“no information seeker can be allowed to insinuate or defame the Commissioners in the guise of prosecuting their cases”....

Under such circumstances, when specific power is vested on the Commissioner and the Commission had proceeded against the information seeker, who had abused the Information Commissioner in the course of his proceedings; it will be open to the said authority to disqualify a particular information seeker by passing a speaking order. Commission, preferred to admonish him.

4. Thus in view of the discussion contained in the forgoing paragraphs of this Judgment the Commission cautions the appellant Sh. A K Mehta is to refrain from such acts in future otherwise he will be blacklisted/banned from seeking information next time.

In view of the position above and in the circumstances of the cases, the petitions are, accordingly, **dismissed.**

Sd/-

**Chandigarh
27.03.2023**

**(Maninder Singh Patti)
State Information Commissioner, Punjab**