Neutral Citation No. (2026:JHHC:26737-DB)

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JHARKHAND AT RANCHI
Criminal Appeal (D.B.) No. 773 of 2026

Raman Kumar Sonu @ Sonu Pandit, S/o Deo Shankar, R/o Barni, P.O. + P.S.- Barni, District- Patna, Bihar
... ... **Appellant**

Versus

The Union of India through NIA ... ... **Respondent**

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CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE RONGON MUKHOPADHYAY
HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE ARUN KUMAR RAI

.....

For the Appellant : Mr. H.K. Shikarwar, Adv.
Mr. Niranjan Kumar, Adv.
For the Respondent-NIA : Mr. Amit Kr. Das, Sr. Adv. (NIA)
Mr. Saurav Kumar, A.C.

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Order No. 06 / Dated, 29th August, 2026
Per Rongon Mukhopadhyay, J.

Heard Mr. H.K. Shikarwar, learned counsel for the appellant and Mr. Amit Kumar Das, learned Senior Counsel for the respondent-NIA.

2. This appeal is directed against the order dated 13.05.2026 passed by Shri Abhimanyu Kumar, learned Additional Judicial Commissioner-XVI-cum-Exclusive Special Judge for NIA Cases, Ranchi in connection with Misc. Criminal Application No. 895 of 2026, arising out of Special NIA Case No. 04 of 2023, corresponding to RC-04/2023/NIA/RNC, whereby and whereunder, the prayer for bail of the appellant has been rejected.

3. The prosecution case in brief is that the Central Government had received information regarding arrest of Chief of People's Liberation Front of India (PLFI) Dinesh Gope @ Kuldeep Yadav @ Badku @ Dg @ Amarjeet Singh by the NIA in Case No. RC-02/2018/NIA/DLI, who during interrogation, disclosed that cadres of PLFI are involved in generating funds through extortion from various Coal Traders, Transporters, Railway Contractors,

Businessmen etc. in Jharkhand, Bihar, Chhattisgarh and Odisha. These cadres are also conspiring to commit various terrorist activities including attacks on the Security forces, murder, arson and use of explosives/IEDs to create terror in the society. It has been alleged that Martin Kerketta and Durga Singh are the Central Committee Members who run PLFI jointly and they along with Krishna Yadav @ Sultan are commanding the armed squad of PLFI. The other members of PLFI viz. Nilamber Gope, Nivesh Kumar, Kapil Pathak @ Rana Singh, Raman Kumar Sonu @ Sonu Pandit (appellant) and Nayak Singh are involved in various anti-national/unlawful activities such as recruitment and procurement of arms and ammunitions for PLFI apart from collection of levy.

In compliance to the order of the Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs order F.No. 11011/81/2023/NIA dated 04.10.2023 the National Investigation Agency, Branch Office Ranchi had registered RC-04/2023/NIA/RNC under Sections 120B and 384 of the IPC and Sections 13, 17, 18, 18B and 20 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 against Martin Kerketta, Durga Singh, Krishna Yadav @ Sultan, Nilamber Gope, Nivesh Kumar, Kapil Pathak @ Rana Singh, Raman Kumar Sonu @ Sonu Pandit, Nanak Singh and others.

4. On completion of investigation charge-sheet was submitted against the accused persons including the appellant.

5. Mr. H.K. Shikarwar, learned counsel for the appellant has submitted that the appellant has been implicated only on the basis of suspicion. The appellant is not connected with any terrorist organization or involved in any anti-national activities as no materials in support of

such allegations have been collected by the Investigating Agency. It has been submitted that the appellant has been implicated on the confessional statement of Dinesh Gope and on his self confession. The appellant is in custody since 18.12.2023 and there is no chance of the trial being concluded in the near future. Mr. Shikarwar, learned counsel for the appellant has referred to an order passed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in the case of a co-accused Shiv Kumar Sahu while submitting that the period of custody and the remote possibility of the trial being concluded in the near future because of the large number of charge-sheet witnesses were the predominant consideration for grant of bail to the co-accused which squarely covers the case of the present appellant.

6. Mr. Amit Kumar Das, learned Senior Counsel for the N.I.A. has opposed the prayer for bail of the appellant and has submitted that in course of investigation it came to light that the appellant was actively involved in supply of arms and ammunitions to the PLFI and had also previously supplied Metal Detectors and Wireless Devices. It has been submitted that from the possession of the appellant arms and ammunitions along with other incriminating articles were recovered. Mr. Das, learned Senior Counsel has further submitted that co-accused Shiv Kumar Sahu was merely a sympathizer of PLFI having no criminal antecedent unlike the case of the present appellant and, therefore, the case of the appellant can easily be distinguishable from the case of Shiv Kumar Sahu. Learned Senior Counsel submits that some witnesses have already been examined and in order to facilitate the speedy disposal of the trial the number of witnesses have been pruned down to 155.

7. We have heard the learned counsel for the respective sides and have also perused the various affidavits on record.

8. The appellant has been arrayed as A-7 in the charge-sheet and the role assigned by him in the subversive activities of the PLFI has been mentioned in para 17.47 and 17.48 of the charge-sheet which reads as follows:

> ***17.47*** *The FIR along with the disclosure memorandum of Accused Dinesh Gope (A-10) dated 28.05.2023 and 05.10.2023 established that A-7 is cadre / member of PLFI and involved in supplying arms and ammunition to PLFI. Recovery made during the house search of Raman Kumar Sonu @ Sonu Pandit establishes the possession of 02 country made pistols and 11 live ammunition. Disclosure of accused Kapil Pathak (A-6) corroborates with the disclosure of accused Dinesh Gope (A-10) about accused A-7 used to supply the arms and ammunition to PLFI. Digital data analysis report of mobile data of Dinesh Gope (A-10) and of accused A-7 proves that accused A-7 was supplying the Arms and ammunition to PLFI. Statement of witness recorded u/s 161 CrPC and 164 CrPC proves that accused A-7 was member of PLFI, received funds collect by operative of PLFI and was supplying arms and ammunition to PLFI.*
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> ***17.48*** *Investigation has established the involvement of accused Raman Kumar Sonu @ Sonu Pandit (A-7) along with other cadre members of PLFI in the larger conspiracy to strengthen/revive PLFI, which is engaging in waging war against the Government of India and devising ways to increase extortion/ collection of levy from businessmen and contractors operating in Jharkhand and other neighbouring states by means of criminal force or the show of criminal force to commit*

terrorist act which threaten unity, integrity, security and sovereignty of India.

9. It appears that the appellant was arrested from Patna and from his possession 02 country made pistols, 11 live cartridges, 02 mobile phones, 01 Pen drive and 01 memory card were seized and the digital devices were sent for forensic examination. The extracted data received from CFSL, New Delhi revealed many images of arms and ammunitions with the appellant which signifies his role as a supplier of arms and ammunitions to the terrorist organization. The appellant has a criminal antecedent being an accused in Sadar P.S. Case No. 412/2019 related to the murder of the General Manager of Thriveni Sainik Group.

10. Mr. H.K. Shikarwar, learned counsel for the appellant in course of his submission had referred to para 17.33 of the charge-sheet while emphasizing the fact that the name of the appellant does not figure in the hierarchical structure of PLFI but the same would not dilute the role played by the appellant which is suggestive of the appellant being an active member of PLFI.

11. The fact regarding co-accused Shiv Kumar Sahu having been granted bail has much been stressed upon by the learned counsel for the appellant but on a perusal of the order dated 13.07.2026 passed in SLP (CRL.) No. 1982/2026 would reveal that apart from the period of incarceration and the delay in conclusion of the trial, the other grounds reflected in the said order is the allegation against the appellant.

12. Mr. Shikarwar, learned counsel for the appellant has failed to demonstrate as to how the case of the present appellant is similar to that of Shiv Kumar Sahu

specially with respect to the allegations centered around each of them.

13. On an overall conspectus of the case what transpires is of a prima facie case being made out against the appellant, thus activating the embargo as envisaged u/s 43D(5) of the UA(P) Act and since the learned trial court has appropriately considered the various features of the case, we do not find any reason to cause interference in the impugned order dated 13.05.2026 passed by Shri Abhimanyu Kumar, learned Additional Judicial Commissioner-XVI-cum-Exclusive Special Judge for NIA Cases, Ranchi in connection with Misc. Criminal Application No. 895 of 2026, arising out of Special NIA Case No. 04 of 2023, corresponding to RC-04/2023/NIA/RNC and, consequently we dismiss this appeal.

14. Pending I.A(s), if any, stands closed.

(Rongon Mukhopadhyay, J.)

(Arun Kumar Rai, J.)

Dated, the 29th August, 2026.
A. Sanga/NAFR
Uploaded on 07/09/2026