



**IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT BOMBAY
BENCH AT AURANGABAD**

BAIL APPLICATION NO. 2241 OF 2025

RITESH RAJKUMAR PURI
VERSUS
THE STATE OF MAHARASHTRA AND ANOTHER

...
Advocate for Applicant : Mr.Suniket Kulkarni h/f. Mr.Abhay B.Avhad
APP for Respondent No.1 : Mr. V. M. Chate
Advocate for Respondent No.2 : Mr. S. M. Pandit
(appointed through Legal Aid)
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CORAM : SACHIN S. DESHMUKH, J.

DATE : 24-12-2025

PER COURT:-

1. The applicant seeks regular bail in connection with Crime No.359 of 2025 dated 27.06.2025 registered with CIDCO Police Station, Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar, for the offences punishable under Sections 8, 11(4) and 12 of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012, and Sections 74, 75, 78, 318(4), 351(2) read with Section 3(5) of the *Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023*. In the said crime, the applicant was arrested on 27.06.2025. After completion of the investigation, the chargesheet has been filed on 22.08.2025.

2. The prosecution case is that 06.08.2025, the victim's father (the informant) discovered golden ornaments missing from his house. After an unsuccessful search for the jewellery, also noticed that Rs.1.67 Lakhs had been transferred via PhonePe from his sister's account. Finding the victim's behavior suspicious, the

informant questioned her. Consequently, the victim revealed that she knew the applicant, who had taken photos of her on his mobile phone. He used Instagram to message the victim thereby threatening to commit suicide, and demanded money. Frightened by these threats and fearing defamation, the victim took over 10 tolas of gold ornaments from her house and handed it to the present applicant. Allegedly, the applicant with co-accused mortgaged the ornaments with the bank and various goldsmiths, receiving money in return. Accordingly, the first information report is lodged.

3. The learned counsel for the applicant submits that the applicant is falsely implicated in the crime. The material in chargesheet does not indicate a *prima facie* case against the applicant, and the recovery of ornaments carried out from another accused. The victim was on the verge of reaching maturity, hence, was aware of the consequences of her actions. As such, prayed to allow the application.

4. Learned A.P.P. for the State and the learned counsel for respondent No.2 have opposed the application, submitting that the offense is serious in nature. It is further submitted that the accused had blackmailed the victim with photographs to coerce her into handing over the valuable ornaments. The accused used to give threats of social media exposure and suicide to manipulate the minor victim. Hence, prayed to reject the bail application.

5. Having heard the submissions from both sides and upon perusal of the record, including the chargesheet indicates that substantial recovery has been carried out by the Investigating agency. The record, *prima facie*, indicates that the victim and the applicant were in contact with each other and it is only after the father of the victim, realized the ornaments were missing, hence, the report has been lodged. Further, the applicant is of the contemporaneous age with that of the victim. The allegations pertaining to coercion and threats by the applicant, are the aspects of trial. Therefore, the discretion can be exercised by imposing stringent conditions for bail.

6. The investigation is complete for all intent and purpose, resultantly, the chargesheet is filed. Having regard to the number of the accused and the witnesses which the prosecution proposes to examine, it is very unlikely that the trial can be commenced and concluded within a reasonable period. As such, further detention of the applicant as an under-trial prisoner, in the circumstances of the case, does not seem to be either warranted or justifiable. I am, therefore, persuaded to exercise the discretion in favour of the applicant.

7. Hence, the following order:-

ORDER

(i) Bail application is allowed.

- (ii) Applicant, Ritesh Rajkumar Puri, be released on bail on furnishing P.B. and S.B. of Rs.50,000/- (Rupees Fifty Thousand only), with one solvent surety of the like amount in connection with Crime No.359 of 2025 dated 27.06.2025 registered with CIDCO Police Station, Chhatrapati Sambhajanagar, for the offences punishable under Sections 8, 11(4) and 12 of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012, and Sections 74, 75, 78, 318(4), 351(2) read with Section 3(5) of the *Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023*, on the conditions that;
- (a) The applicant shall not pressurize the prosecution witnesses and shall not tamper with the prosecution evidence, in any manner.
 - (b) The applicant shall attend the trial on each and every date unless exempted by the trial Court.
 - (c) The applicant shall submit their Aadhar and Pan Cards to the Investigation Officer and detailed addresses and phone numbers of applicants and two of the near relatives.
 - (d) In case of breach of any of the conditions by the applicants, it is open for the Prosecution to move this Court seeking cancellation of bail.
- (iii) The Secretary, High Court Legal Services Sub-Committee, Aurangabad to pay the fees of the appointed counsel for respondent No.2/victim as per schedule.
- (iv) Needless to state that the observations rendered herein are to the extent of this application and the trial court shall not be influenced by the same.

[SACHIN S. DESHMUKH, J.]