

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT BOMBAY
CRIMINAL APPELLATE JURISDICTION**

Anticipatory Bail Application No.1842 of 2025

Shekhar Dilip Gadekar
Age – 34, Occ: Business,
Add. 19th Lane, in front of
Samaj Mandir, Jaysingpur,
Tal Shirol, Dist Kolhapur.

... Applicant

versus

State of Maharashtra
(Through PI, Shahapur
Police Station, Dist Kolhapur)

... Respondent

Mr Priyal Sarda, along with Mr Sachin Mane, Mr Shubham Sane, Ms Seema Dighe and Mr Rajesh Ranglani, for the applicant.

Mr SS Pednekar, APP, for the respondent/ State.

PSI Kishori Sabale, Shahapur Police Station, Kolhapur, present.

**Coram: R.N. Laddha, J.
Date: 11 July 2025.**

P.C.:

By this application, the applicant seeks pre-arrest bail in connection with CR No.203 of 2025, registered at Shahapur Police Station, Kolhapur, for offences punishable under Sections 308(2), 204, 351(2), and 351(3) read with 3(5) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023.

2. The prosecution alleges that accused No.1, posing as a Deputy Credit Manager at Bank of India, befriended the informant under the pretext of assisting him to procure a loan. She later made advances, and upon resistance, threatened to falsely accuse the informant of an illicit affair. She then summoned him to Hotel Signature, where the applicant and the co-accused demanded Rs.3 crores from the informant and threatened to leak indecent photographs online. Accused No.2 later continued to demand the ransom.

3. Mr Priyal Sarda, the learned Counsel appearing on behalf of the applicant, asserts the applicant's innocence and submits that the applicant has been falsely implicated in the crime. He points out that the primary allegations of extortion are against accused No.1, who has already been arrested. The only allegation against the applicant is that he, along with the co-accused, allegedly demanded money from the informant. Notably, there is no allegations that the applicant received the amount allegedly demanded. The learned Counsel further submits that the co-accused with a similar role has already been granted anticipatory bail. Furthermore, nothing is to be recovered or discovered at the behest of the applicant, and the applicant is ready to abide by any conditions this Court imposes if released on bail.

4. Mr SS Pednekar, the learned Additional Public Prosecutor representing the respondent/ State, emphasises the severity of the offence and submits that the applicant played an active and direct role in the commission of the crime, with a specific and identifiable part attributed to him. The learned APP also raises concerns about the potential evidence tampering and witness influence if the applicant is granted pre-arrest bail.

5. This Court has given anxious consideration to the rival submissions canvassed across the Bar.

6. Upon perusing the records, it appears that the only role attributed to the applicant is that he, along with the co-accused, approached the informant at Hotel Signature and allegedly demanded Rs.3 crores from the informant. However, it is an admitted position that no money was handed over to the applicant and the co-accused who are alleged to be present at the relevant time. The co-accused, whose role mirrors that of the applicant, has already been granted anticipatory bail. The primary accused, i.e., accused No.1, has already been arrested. The investigation is at an advanced stage, and nothing is to be recovered or discovered from the applicant. The prosecution's apprehensions about evidence tampering and witness influence can be mitigated by imposing suitable conditions. In the

circumstances, this Court is inclined to exercise its discretion in favour of the applicant. Hence, the following order:

ORDER

- (i) In the event of the applicant's arrest in connection with CR No.203 of 2025, registered at Shahapur Police Station, Kolhapur, he shall be released on bail upon executing a PR Bond of Rs.25,000/- and furnishing one or more sureties in the like amount.
- (ii) The applicant shall attend the concerned Police Station as and when required.
- (iii) The applicant, himself or through any other person, shall not tamper with the evidence or influence witnesses.

7. The application stands disposed of accordingly.

(R.N. Laddha, J.)