

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

Anticipatory Bail Application No.1920 of 2025

Shantabai Pundalik Walkunde
Age : 64 yrs, Occ: Housewife,
R/o 11/476, Opp Shri Hari Theatre
Yashwant Colony, Ichalkaranji,
Tal Hatkanangle, Dist. Kolhapur

... Applicant.

Vs.

The State of Maharashtra
(through Shahapur Police Station)

... Respondent.

Mr Kedar Patil, Advocate, i/by Pratik Tare for the applicant.
Mr Shahji Shinde, Panel 'B' Counsel, a/w Mr Pankaj
Deokar, APP for the respondent / State.
API Poonam S Mane, Ichalkaranji Police Station, Kolhapur.

**Coram : R.N.Laddha, J.
Date : 15 July 2025.**

P.C. :

Heard the learned Counsel for the parties.

2. 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.

3. According to the prosecution, accused No.1, posing as 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.

4. 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 present case. The learned Counsel further submits 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. However, it is not the case of the prosecution that the applicant received the amount allegedly demanded. The learned Counsel points out that the co-accused with a similar role have already been granted anticipatory bail, and nothing is to be recovered or discovered at the behest of the applicant. The applicant is

ready to abide by any conditions this Court imposes if granted anticipatory bail.

5. The learned Additional Public Prosecutor representing the respondent/ State submits that the offence is of a grave and serious nature and the applicant played an active and direct role in the commission of the crime. The learned APP also raises concerns about the potential evidence tampering and witness influence if the applicant is granted pre-arrest bail. The learned APP, however, concedes that the co-accused with a similar role have already been granted anticipatory bail and the investigation in the present crime is almost complete and nothing is to be recovered or discovered from the applicant.

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, with a similar role have already been granted anticipatory

bail. The main accused, i.e., accused No.1, has already been arrested. The investigation is almost complete, and nothing is to be recovered or discovered from the applicant. The prosecution's apprehensions about evidence tampering and witness influence can be addressed by imposing appropriate 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, she 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, herself 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.]