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

**ANTICIPATORY BAIL APPLICATION NO. 762/2025**

RAMDAS BHARAT POPLAIT @ PRAVIN PATIL ..APPLICANT
VS.
STATE OF MAHARASHTRA ..RESPONDENT

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Mr. Dushyant Pagare i/b. Mr. P. S. Abrol for applicant.
Mr. H. S. Venegaonkar, Chief P.P. a/w. Mr. Ajay S. Patil, APP for State.

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**CORAM : RAJESH S. PATIL, J.**

**DATE : APRIL 8, 2025.**

**<u>ORDER</u> :**

**1.** The present case reminds me of a classic Hollywood movie ***"Catch Me If You Can"***. The said movie depicts the real life story of one Frank Abagnale Jr., a master of deception who successfully forged identities and evaded the FBI for years before eventually getting imprisoned for his crimes.

**2.** This application is filed under Section 482 of the Bhartiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 for seeking pre-arrest bail in connection with the First Information Report (FIR) No.70/2025 registered with the CBD Belapur Police Station, for the offence punishable under Sections 474, 469, 467, 465, 464, 420, 419, 409, 406 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860.

**3.** As per the complaint, an FIR has been lodged and the role of the present applicant has been mentioned. It is the prosecution case that the present applicant has represented himself with four different names viz. (i) Ramdas Bharat Poplait, (ii) Pravin Patil, (iii) Rahul Deshpande and (iv) Ganesh Shinde.

**4.** It is alleged that applicant has duped many victims. The investigation is still in progress. As of today, the amount comes to approximately Rs.2 crores, based on a complaint filed by one Mr.Hemant Katkar, who lodged the FIR.

**5.** The pre-arrest bail application filed earlier in the Sessions Court by the present applicant who has identified himself as Ramdas Poplait @ Pravin Patil was rejected. Thereafter, the present anticipatory bail application has been filed by the applicant.

**6.** It is submitted on behalf of the applicant that his earlier name was Ramdas Bharat Poplait, thereafter, by a Gazette entry dated 1/11/2023, he has changed his name to Pravin Patil residing at Omkar Heights, Kharghar. He claims that he was not aware about any person by name of Rahul Deshpande and Ganesh Shinde. He has not forged any documents referred by the police as far as the informant

Hemant Katkar is concerned. The present applicant made all genuine efforts to sanction loans for Hemant Katkar. Initially, a loan amount of Rs.3,13,00,000/- was received by the informant Hemant Katkar in his account. In return, for efforts taken by the present applicant certain amounts as agreed were paid to him, However, the commission allegedly due to that effect was not paid to the present applicant. Thereafter, the said informant Hemant Katkar desired to obtain one more loan amounting to Rs.5 crores. For obtaining a loan of Rs.5 crores, according to the prosecution’s case, the informant Hemant Katkar paid various amounts to different individuals totaling to Rs.36,31,070/-. A sum of Rs.3 lakhs is paid to the present applicant. The present applicant is not aware to whom entire sum of Rs.36,31,070 lakhs is paid. As per the prosecution’s case, in the FIR the said sum was paid to Rahul Deshpande/Pravin Patil. The present applicant has not forged any document in Government records to obtain PAN card in the name of Rahul Deshpande and Election Identity card, since the present applicant is not aware who is Rahul Deshpande. As regards Ganesh Shinde, the present applicant is not aware about the said person. He submitted that it is interesting to see that different identity cards have been produced by the police authorities. However, in the said photographs, the shirt wore by the present applicant remains the same, which is highly impossible.

**7.** It is submitted that except one criminal antecedent, there is no criminal antecedent reported as far as the present applicant concerned. The said one antecedent arises out of the matrimonial proceeding, where a lady claiming to be the applicant's wife has filed a proceeding under Section 498-A of the IPC against the applicant and his parents. The said lady no longer resides in India. Since the applicant was already married and the case of the lady who filed Section 498-A proceeding was weak, as the relationship with her was *void ab-initio* since the applicant's first marriage was subsisting. Since there is no other antecedents as far as present applicant is concerned and the applicant is ready to cooperate with the police, the custody of the present applicant is not necessary.

**8.** The learned Chief Public Prosecutor Mr. Venegavkar appearing on behalf of the State submits that as of now, there are seven victims and the amount involved is more than Rs.2 crores. The *modus operandi* adopted by the present applicant is almost same with every victim. Apart from the informant Hemant Katkar, the IO has recorded the statements of two more victims. The present applicant has represented public in general at least by four different names.

Accordingly, he has produced and shown his photo identity cards. From investigation conducted so far it is discovered, as far as name Ramdas Poplait is concerned, he has opened bank account with IDFC Bank and in the said bank account he has used an email address as: pravinpatilsbi148@gmail.com. As the email contains alphabets 'sbi', a common man will consider him as a employee of the SBI. He has further mentioned his mobile number, which after enquiry has been found of one of the victim. As far as the second name is concerned that of Pravin Patil, he has used an identity card of SBI to show that he is a manager of that bank. So also, it has been discovered that he has used two letters on the letterheads of the SBI one of which is an approval letter of loan, which has been found to be fake. He has also used fake identity card of the SBI to cheat people. As regards the third name used by the present applicant i.e. Rahul Deshpande. As per the investigation, the said Rahul Deshpande has in fact travelled to Delhi for sanctioning huge loan. For the purpose of buying tickets and hotel booking in Delhi, he has used PAN card and Election Identity card for identification purpose. On both documents he has shown his name as Rahul Deshpande and photograph remains same as used by the name Ramdas Poplait and Pravin Patil. The present applicant has also represented himself with fourth name Ganesh

Shinde. One of the victim has identified the present applicant by name Ganesh Shinde who has uploaded a video on YouTube Channel. The police are investigating the said issue also.

**9.** The offence which the present applicant has committed as of now he has duped multiple victims including the present informant - Hemant Katkar, by falsely assuring them of granting of loan and for that purpose accepting huge amounts in cash. For duping people, he has forged Government documents for obtaining PAN card, Election Identity card, SBI Identity card, letterhead of SBI.

**10.** The custody of the present applicant is necessary in order to trace the money involved in the present crime, especially considering that the applicant uses four different names. Additionally, custodial interrogation would assist in identifying the other individuals involved in assisting the present applicant in the alleged offence.

**11.** Apart from that there is non-bailable warrant issued against the present applicant. So also, there is a proclamation issued against the present applicant on 7/5/2015 in a case pending before JMFC, Cantonment Court, Khadki, Pune. As of now, according to the information of the IO, the applicant has not taken any steps for cancellation of the non-bailable warrant.

**12.** Heard learned counsel for the applicant and learned Chief Public Prosecutor for the State. I have taken into consideration the various documents produced before me.

**13.** In the present case, the applicant has himself admitted that he is Ramdas Bharat Poplait and he is also Pravin Patil. He has admitted that a Gazette to that effect for changing his name has been obtained by him by making necessary applications. The learned Chief Public Prosecutor submitted that when non-bailable warrant was issued by the JMFC, Cantonment Court, Khadki, Pune, in a proceeding filed by a lady under Section 498-A of the IPC, he in order to avoid arrest has changed his name. Similarly, it appears that he has changed his name in order to commit a crime whereby he shown to be different person. There are several victims of the crime. The amount involved as of now is more than Rs. 2 crores. The documents which are brought on record as of now are the identity card of SBI where photograph matches with the photograph on the PAN card and voter's identity card of Rahul Deshpande. The SBI identity card shows the same photograph i.e. the name is shown as Pravin Patil. Therefore, the argument on behalf of the applicant that he does not know Rahul Deshpande when the PAN card and voter’s identity card which was produced before the travel agency and for the hotel booking in Delhi by the present applicant has to be verified by the investigating agency.

**14.** Apart from duping victims, he has also forged the Government documents in order to secure (a) SBI identity card in the name of Pravin Patil, (b) two letterheads prepared of SBI again for Pravin Patil, (c) PAN card in the name of Rahul Deshpande. On verification it is found that the PAN card is forged document, (d) Election Identity card again in the name of Rahul Deshpande which is also found to be forged document and (e) a email address in the name of Ramdas Poplait which shows that he is an employee of SBI.

**15.** One more ground for rejection of this pre-arrest bail would be that there was no explanation from the learned counsel for the applicant as regards the non-bailable warrant and proclamation issued against Ramdas Poplait, who is the present applicant before this Court. There is no explanation as to what steps, if any, he has taken for cancellation of the non-bailable warrant and proclamation in the proceedings where a lady claimed that the applicant stayed with her as her husband, and thereafter, there were matrimonial discord, and hence, she filed proceedings under Section 498-A of the IPC against the applicant and his parents. The Supreme Court in the case of *Sanatan Pandey versus State of Uttar Pradesh and Anr. in Special Leave Petition (Criminal) No. 7358 of 2021* has held that the Court shall not come to the rescue or help the accused who is not cooperating the investigating agency and absconding and against whom not only non-bailable warrant has been issued but also the proclamation under Section 82 of the Cr.P.C. has been issued.

**16.** Considering the gravity of the offence committed by the present applicant and who has at least admitted that he is Ramdas Poplait and he is also Pravin Patil, the physical presence of the applicant for interrogation is necessary for completion of the investigation to find out whether the applicant is also representing himself as Rahul Deshpande and Ganesh Shinde. Moreover, the possibility of pressurizing and threatening witnesses and tampering with the evidence cannot be ruled out. Hence, no case is made out to grant pre- arrest bail to the present applicant. **The anticipatory bail application of the applicant stands rejected and disposed of accordingly**.

**(RAJESH S. PATIL, J.)**