

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

Anticipatory Bail Application No.1844 of 2025

Shilpa Santosh Bokan

Age: 37 yrs, Occ: Housewife

R/at Gadkariwasti, Urulikanchan,

Taluka Haveli, Dist. Pune-412202

... Applicant

Versus

The State of Maharashtra

Through the Urulikanchan

Police Station, Pune.

(Notice to be served on APP,

HC, AS, Bombay)

... Respondent

Ms Srushti S Chalke i/by Ms Priya Chaubey for the applicant.

Mr Prashant Jadhav, APP for the respondent/ State.

PSI Pravin Kamble, Urulikanchan Police Station, Pune Rural.

Coram : R.N.Laddha, J.

Date : 9 July 2025

P.C. :

The applicant apprehends arrest in connection with CR No.164 of 2025, registered at Uruli Kanchan Police Station, Pune Rural, for offences punishable under Sections 64(2)(m), 77, 351(2), 351(3), and 314 read with 3(5) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023.

2. According to the prosecution, co-accused Santosh repeatedly sexually assaulted the informant, while the applicant recorded the incident on 10 June 2022 and took obscene photographs. Both then threatened to leak the material unless she transferred her house. The applicant also misappropriated the informant's jewellery.

3. Ms Srushti Chalke, 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 crime. She submits that the genesis of the dispute lies in a strained personal relationship, which eventually deteriorated in 2024. The informant then began to threaten the applicant's husband with the publication of certain photographs and demanded money, thereby indulging in the acts of extortion. In response to this harassment, the applicant's husband lodged an FIR against the informant on 6 April 2025. The learned Counsel submits that the present FIR lodged on 29 May 2025 by the informant was purely an act of retaliation and with *malafide* intent. The learned Counsel further submits that the applicant has no criminal antecedents and is ready to abide by any conditions imposed by this Court, including surrendering her mobile phone.

4. Mr Prashant Jadhav, the learned Counsel appearing on behalf of the respondent/ State, submits that the offence is of a grave and serious nature. Upon receiving instructions from the investigating officer present in the Court, he appraises the Court that the investigation has progressed substantially and is now at an advanced stage. He further states that, except for the recovery of the applicant's mobile phone, no further material evidence or discovery remains pending from her end. The learned APP also clarifies that the prosecution does not seek the custody of the applicant, provided that she hands over her mobile phone to the investigating agency as required.

5. This Court has given anxious consideration to the rival contentions and perused the records.

6. Upon perusing the records, it appears that the applicant's involvement is primarily limited to recording the alleged incident that took place on 10 June 2022, capturing objectionable photographs of the informant, and subsequently threatening to disseminate the said material online. *Prima facie*, there is a noticeable and unexplained delay in the lodging of the FIR. It is also pertinent to note that a counter-FIR, filed prior in time, has been registered against the informant,

wherein she is accused of committing extortion. Furthermore, the learned APP fairly submits that apart from the applicant's mobile phone, which she is willing to handover voluntarily, there is no other material object or evidence that remains to be recovered or discovered from her possession. The apprehension expressed by the prosecution regarding the potential for tampering with the evidence or influencing witness can be mitigated by the imposition of appropriate conditions.

7. In light of the above, 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.164 of 2025, registered at Uruli Kanchan Police Station, Pune Rural, 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 on 14 July 2025, 15 July 2025 and 16 July 2025 between

11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m., surrender her mobile phone, and cooperate with the investigation.

(iii) The applicant, herself or through any other person, shall not tamper with the evidence or influence witnesses.

8. The application stands disposed of accordingly.

(R. N. Laddha, J.)