IN THE HIGH COURT OF KERALA AT ERNAKULAM

PRESENT

THE HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE P.V.KUNHIKRISHNAN

THURSDAY, THE 10TH DAY OF APRIL 2025/20TH CHAITHRA, 1947

BAIL APPL. NO. 5185 OF 2025

CRIME NO.583/2025 OF SASTHAMCOTTA POLICE STATION, KOLLAM

IN CMP NO.786 OF 2025 OF JUDICIAL FIRST CLASS MAGISTRATE COURT - II, SASTHAMCOTTA

PETITIONER/SOLE ACCUSED:

SREEKUMAR
AGED 50 YEARS
S/O.BALAKRISHNAN, SALU BHAVANAM, ITHOTTUVA MURI, WEST KALLADA P.O., WEST KALLDA VILLAGE, KUNNATHOOR, KOLLAM, PIN - 691500

BY ADVS.
B.MOHANLAL
P.S.PREETHA
ASWIN V. NAIR
KARTHIK J SEKHAR
ABIJITH M.
AVANI NAIR
JAYAPRABHA ARJUN
PRAVEENA T.

RESPONDENT/STATE AND COMPLAINANT:

1 **STATE OF KERALA**
REPRESENTED BY PUBLIC PROSECUTOR,HIGH COURT OF KERALA, PIN - 682031

2 **THE STATION HOUSE OFFICER**
SASTHAMCOTTAH POLICE STATION,

SASTHAMCOTTAH P.O., KOLLAM, PIN - 690521

BY ADV
G SUDHEER, PP

THIS BAIL APPLICATION HAVING COME UP FOR ADMISSION ON 10.04.2025, THE COURT ON THE SAME DAY DELIVERED THE FOLLOWING:

P.V.KUNHIKRISHNAN, J

B.A.No.5185 of 2025

Dated this the 10th day of April, 2025

O R D E R

This Bail Application is filed under Section 483 of Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita.

2. Petitioner is the accused in Crime No.583 of 2025 of Sasthamcotta Police Station, Kollam. The above case is registered against the petitioner alleging offences punishable under Sections 138 and 75 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhitha (for short'BNS') 2023 and Section 92(b) of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016.

3. The prosecution case is that the accused with intention to kidnap and sexually harass the victim having intellectual disability reached Anjalimood Market

on 24.03.2025 at about 11:00 a.m., the accused forcibly took the victim in the Pick-up van and stood in the name of the daughter of the accused Smt. Sruthy Sreekumar, when the accused and victim reached at Kuttimukku Junction, took Tea from Fathima Hotel and later driven the vehicle through a pocket road, the accused caught hold of the victim, kissed her, grasped her breast and outraged her modesty and thereby the accused committed the offence.

4. Heard counsel for the petitioner and the Public Prosecutor.

5. Counsel for the petitioner submits that the petitioner is in custody from 27.03.2025. The incident is not happened as alleged by the prosecution. The petitioner was actually giving a lift. The counsel submitted that the petitioner is ready to abide any conditions, if this Court grants him bail.

6. Public prosecutor opposed the petitioner.

7. This Court considered the contentions of the petitioner and the public prosecutor. The maximum punishment that can be imposed for the offences alleged are upto 7 years. The petitioner is in custody from 27.03.2025. Considering the facts and circumstances of the case, I think the petitioner can be released on bail after imposing stringent conditions.

8. Moreover, it is a well accepted principle that the bail is the rule and the jail is the exception. The Hon'ble Supreme Court in **Chidambaram. P v Directorate of Enforcement [2019 (16) SCALE 870],** after considering all the earlier judgments, observed that, the basic jurisprudence relating to bail remains the same inasmuch as the grant of bail is the rule and refusal is the exception so as to ensure that the accused has the opportunity of securing fair trial.

9. Moreover, in **Jalaluddin Khan v. Union of India [2024 KHC 6431]**, the Hon'ble Supreme Court

observed that:

> “21. Before we part with the Judgment, we must mention here that the Special Court and the High Court did not consider the material in the charge sheet objectively. Perhaps the focus was more on the activities of PFI, and therefore, the appellant's case could not be properly appreciated. When a case is made out for a grant of bail, the Courts should not have any hesitation in granting bail. The allegations of the prosecution may be very serious. But, the duty of the Courts is to consider the case for grant of bail in accordance with the law. "Bail is the rule and jail is an exception" is a settled law. Even in a case like the present case where there are stringent conditions for the grant of bail in the relevant statutes, the same rule holds good with only modification that the bail can be granted if the conditions in the statute are satisfied. The rule also means that once a case is made out for the grant of bail, the Court cannot decline to grant bail. If the Courts start denying bail in deserving cases, it will be a violation of the rights guaranteed under Art.21 of our Constitution.” (underline supplied)

10. In **Manish Sisodia v. Directorate of Enforcement [2024 KHC 6426]**, also the Hon'ble Supreme Court observed that:

> “53. The Court further observed that, over a period of time, the trial courts and the High Courts have forgotten a very well - settled principle of law that bail is not to be withheld as a punishment. From our experience, we can say that it appears that the trial courts and the High Courts attempt to play safe in matters of grant of bail. The principle that bail is a rule and refusal is an exception is, at times, followed in breach. On account of non - grant of bail even in straight forward open and shut cases, this Court is flooded with huge number of bail petitions thereby adding to the huge pendency. It is high time that the trial courts and the High Courts should recognize the principle that "bail is rule and jail is exception".”

Considering the dictum laid down in the above decision and considering the facts and circumstances of this case, this Bail Application is allowed with the

following directions:

1. Petitioner shall be released on bail on executing a bond for Rs.50,000/- (Rupees Fifty Thousand only) with two solvent sureties each for the like sum to the satisfaction of the jurisdictional Court.

2. The petitioner shall appear before the Investigating Officer for interrogation as and when required. The petitioner shall co-operate with the investigation and shall not, directly or indirectly make any inducement, threat or promise to any person acquainted with the facts of the case so as to dissuade him/her from disclosing such facts to the

Court or to any police officer.

3. Petitioner shall not leave India without permission of the jurisdictional Court.

4. Petitioner shall not commit an offence similar to the offence of which he is accused, or suspected, of the commission of which he is suspected.

5. The observations and findings in this order is only for the purpose of deciding this bail application. The principle laid down by this Court in **Anzar Azeez v. State of Kerala** [2025 SCC OnLine KER 1260] is applicable in this case also.

6. If any of the above conditions are violated by the petitioner, the jurisdictional Court can cancel the bail in accordance to law, even though the bail is granted by this Court. The prosecution and the victim are at liberty to approach the jurisdictional court to cancel the bail, if there is any violation of the above conditions.

Sd/-

P.V.KUNHIKRISHNAN
JUDGE

AMR