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* **IN THE HIGH COURT OF DELHI AT NEW DELHI**

\+ BAIL APPLN. 3556/2025

THADANI SHANKER .....Petitioner

Through: Mr. Satyam Thareja, Ms. Harshita Lulla, Mr. Rajesh Pandey, Ms. Nisha and Mr. Shikhar Yadav, Advocates

versus

STATE OF NCT DELHI .....Respondent

Through: Mr. Manoj Pant, APP for the State with SI Raj Kumar Singh, P.S. Cyber South District Saket New Delhi

CORAM:
HON'BLE DR. JUSTICE SWARANA KANTA SHARMA

O R D E R

% **07.11.2025**

1. By way of the instant application, the applicant seeks grant of regular bail in case arising out of FIR bearing No. 97/2024, registered at Police Station Cyber Police Station, South, New Delhi for the commission of offence punishable under Section 420/120B/34 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860 (hereafter '*IPC*').

2. Briefly stated, facts of the present case are that a complaint *vide* NCRP Acknowledgement No. 20805240038420 dated 18.05.2024 regarding cheating of ₹35,00,000/- of one Sachin Singh, resident of Arjun Nagar, Kotla Mubarakpur, New Delhi, was received at Cyber Police Station, South District, Saket, New Delhi, through the NCRP Portal and was marked for enquiry. During enquiry, it came to notice that the complainant had received

a WhatsApp message from mobile number 91- 8102008900 and had been added to a WhatsApp group named "SMC Stock Chat 63." He had been induced by one person claiming to be the group administrator to download a fake "SMC Trading App" resembling the Google Play Store interface and had been persuaded to invest in share trading and IPOs on assurances of high returns. The complainant had thereafter been deceived into transferring amounts on the pretext of trading profits and commissions, and upon attempting to withdraw his alleged earnings, had been informed that he must first pay 25% as commission. Realising he had been defrauded, he had lodged the complaint, whereafter the present FIR had been registered and investigation had commenced. During the course of investigation, it was revealed that ₹20 lakhs out of the cheated amount had been transferred to a Punjab National Bank (PNB) Account, held in the name of one Siddhi Vinayak Corporation, operated by the co-accused Umesh Lal Chandani.

3. During the course of investigation, the applicant herein had been served with a notice under Section 35(3) of BNSS, however, he did not join the investigation. Eventually, he was arrested on 10.10.2024 and it was found that the aforesaid PNB Bank account was linked with the email ID of the present applicant, logged into his mobile phone. After completion of investigation, the chargesheet was filed against the accused persons.

4. The learned counsel appearing for the applicant argues that the applicant has been falsely implicated and no active role is attributable to him. It is contended that he has been in judicial custody for more than 11 months, and the only allegation against him is that he had provided certain account numbers to the main accused. In this regard, it is pointed out that the entire amount was credited to the genuine corporate account of the main

accused, Umesh Lalchandani, whose bail has already been dismissed by this Court *vide* order dated 14.10.2025, and not to any bank account of the applicant. Furthermore, it is argued that the sole incriminating material relied upon is the WhatsApp chats and an email ID allegedly linked to the applicant's number; however, the same, by themselves do not establish the applicant's involvement in the commission of alleged offence. Thus, it is prayed that the present bail application be allowed.

5. The learned APP for the State, on the other hand, argues that the allegations against the present applicant/accused are serious in nature. It is submitted that the offence involves a cheating of ₹37,20,000/-, routed through five bank accounts, one of which was operated by the present applicant. It is pointed out that ₹20,00,000/- was transferred to the PNB Bank account, belonging to co-accused, Umesh Lalchandani, whose bail was dismissed by this Court on 14.10.2024, and that this bank account was further linked to the email ID of the present applicant. Further, it is contended that the WhatsApp chats between the applicant and co-accused persons reveal references to mule accounts used for routing the cheated amount by the co-accused and the present applicant. It is further contended that the present account is also involved in another FIR No. 153/2024, registered at Police Station Cyber Crime, East Gurgaon, Haryana, as well as with two other NCRP Complaints. Thus, it is prayed that the present bail application be rejected.

6. This Court has **heard** arguments addressed on behalf of the applicant as well as the State, and has perused the material available on record.

7. The allegations against the present applicant/accused, in brief, are that he, along with co-accused, had cheated the complainant of ₹37,20,000/- by

inducing him to invest in a fraudulent stock trading application and IPOs.

8. By way of order dated 14.10.2025, this Court, while dismissing the bail application of co-accused Umesh Lalchandani, had observed that co-accused Umesh had received a substantial portion of the cheated amount in his bank account and had concealed and misappropriated the funds. It was further observed that the transactions *prima facie* revealed a fraudulent transfer of a total amount of ₹20,00,000/-, in the bank account of co-accused Umesh, which amount had been subsequently withdrawn. Furthermore, this Court took into consideration the fact that during the course of investigation, it was revealed upon verification from the NCRP portal that the PNB bank account of co-accused Umesh Lalchandani was also linked with another FIR bearing No. 152/2024, registered at Police Station Cyber Crime, East Gurgaon, Haryana, as well as with two other NCRP complaints.

9. Insofar as the present applicant is concerned, it is pertinent to note that it was revealed during investigation that initially, the email ID of co-accused Umesh was linked with the aforesaid PNB Bank account; however, later, the email ID of the present applicant i.e. *shankerthadani158@gmail.com* had been linked to the Bank account in question, in which the amount of ₹20,00,000/- had been transferred by the complainant. Furthermore, the said email ID was also found logged in the mobile phone of the present applicant.

10. This Court has also perused the WhatsApp chats, placed on record, between the mobile numbers 99******70 and 76******42 belonging to the present applicant, and 97******93 belonging to the co-accused Umesh, which prima facie reflects that the present applicant had been provided details of certain bank accounts, with the name 'SAKHI CRETION' and

their respective passwords, by the co-accused Umesh and he had also advised as to opening additional corporate accounts with a view to facilitate transfer of funds (alleged to be a part of the money trail). Moreover, the said chats also reveal as to how the applicant herein had provided SIM card and other vital information to the other accused persons i.e. Anand Rawat and Pritam Jadhav. In this regard, it is the specific case of prosecution that these WhatsApp chats disclose that details of various other mule bank accounts were supplied to the present applicant by co-accused Umesh, allegedly for the purpose of commission of offence in question.

11. Therefore, considering the overall facts and circumstances of the case, seriousness of the allegations, and taking note of the modus operandi adopted by the applicant and the co-accused, for inducing and cheating the complainant, this Court does not find any ground to grant regular bail to the applicant at this stage.

12. Accordingly, the present application stands dismissed.

13. It is, however, clarified that nothing expressed herein above shall tantamount to an expression of opinion on merits of the case.

14. The order be uploaded on the website forthwith.

DR. SWARANA KANTA SHARMA, J

NOVEMBER 07, 2025/ns