



**IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT BOMBAY**  
**BENCH AT AURANGABAD**

**BAIL APPLICATION NO. 112 OF 2026**

PRADEEP KESHAV RATHOD AND OTHERS  
VERSUS  
THE STATE OF MAHARASHTRA

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Advocate for Applicant : Mr. Ravindra B. Ade  
APP for Respondents-State : Ms. R. R. Tandale

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**CORAM : SACHIN S. DESHMUKH, J.**

**Date : 6<sup>th</sup> February, 2026**

**ORDER :-**

1. The applicants have approached this Court seeking regular bail in connection with FIR dated 26.10.2025 bearing Crime No. 291 of 2025 registered with MIDC Paithan Police Station, Dist. Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar for the offences punishable under Sections 85, 80(2), 108, 115(2), 352, 351(2), 3(5) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023.

2. The case of the prosecution is that Gayabai Tarachand Chavan, a 40-year-old sugarcane harvester residing at Dongaon Tanda No. 2, Paithan, presented complaint against the in-laws of her deceased daughter Sonali.

3. Sonali married Pradeep Keshav Rathod of Tekdi Tanda in 2021 and had a 14-month-old daughter named Achal. Following an initial period of harmony, Sonali was subjected to persistent physical abuse and verbal insults by her husband, mother-in-law Tarabai, and father-in-law Keshav Rathod.

4. Prior to the festival Sonali reported violence to her mother, prompting her brother Arun to bring her back to Dongaon Tanda for safety. During her stay, Sonali revealed that her husband, parents-in-law, and several extended family members, including Vansingh, Vinayak, Antilal, and Shamrao Rathod, as well as her sisters-in-law Nisha, Diksha, and Usha, frequently tortured her. They demanded Rs. 1,00,000/- for the purchase of a motorcycle and repeatedly harassed her for want of male child, threatening to arrange a second marriage for Pradeep to force her out of the house.

5. Despite these threats Pradeep and Vansingh later took Sonali back to her marital home, warning her family not to expect her return. On 25.10.2025, approximately at 11:30 am, Gayabai's brother-in-law Vishnu Chavan, reported seeing Pradeep transporting an unconscious Sonali on a motorcycle. When Gayabai

confronted Pradeep via telephone, he claimed Sonali was ill and directed the family to Varad Hospital, Bidkin, before abruptly hanging up.

6. Upon arrival at the hospital, the family found Sonali abandoned by her in-laws and subsequently pronounced dead by doctors. Inquiries in Tekdi Tanda revealed that Sonali had committed suicide by jumping into a well in Gevrai Barshi-Shivar on 25.10.2025. This act was the direct result of the relentless physical and mental cruelty inflicted by the aforementioned accused individuals. Gayabai requests formal action against all parties involved for their role in her daughter's death.

7. The learned counsel for the applicants submits that the applicants have been falsely implicated in the offence, emphasizing the absence of any independent eyewitness to establish their complicity. The prosecution case regarding the demand for Rs.1,00,000/- for a motorcycle is vague and lacks specific corroboration.

8. The learned counsel further submits that the mere occurrence of a suicide within the matrimonial home does not

axiomatically attract the ingredients of abetment or cruelty. There is no evidence of any immediate or provocative act by the applicants that would constitute "instigation" as defined under the law. The investigation is complete and the charge-sheet is also filed. Nothing remains to be recovered at the instance of present applicants. As such, further incarceration of the applicants is unjustified. Hence, prayed to allow the application.

9. The learned APP opposed the application, submitting that the offence is serious in nature and that there is sufficient material on record to establish the applicant's complicity. The learned APP further submits that the deceased Sonali, died within the four walls of her matrimonial home within only four years of marriage. The evidence indicates that the harassment was not limited to financial demands but extended to serious emotional abuse regarding Sonali's failure to bear a male child. Furthermore, the APP argued that if the applicant is released on bail, there is every possibility of the prosecution evidence being tampered with. Accordingly, it was prayed that the application be rejected.

10. Upon considering the submissions of both sides and perusing the material on record, including the charge-sheet, the

primary allegation regarding the demand for Rs. 1,00,000/- for a motorcycle prima facie appears to be general in nature without specific dates or instances of such demands being made in the immediate proximity of the death. First the informant has implicated ten different family members in the FIR, including distant relatives and sisters-in-law living elsewhere. Prima facie, this tendency to involve the entire family of the husband often necessitates a cautious approach even at the bail stage to ensure that incarceration does not become a tool for harassment before the charges are proven.

11. The prosecution's case prima facie indicates that the applicant Pradeep was seen transporting the deceased to a hospital. This conduct of taking the deceased to a medical facility, rather than concealing the body, is a factor that the Court considers in favor of the applicants' plea that there was no immediate intent to abscond. The medical reports and the post-mortem findings indicate death by drowning, which supports the theory of suicide.

12. The question of whether the applicants' conduct amounted to "instigation" under Section 306 of the IPC is a matter

of trial. Furthermore, the co-accused have already been granted interim protection by this Hon'ble Court in their respective anticipatory bail applications.

13. The investigation is complete for all intent and purpose and the charge-sheet is filed. Having regard to the number of accused and the witnesses which the prosecution proposes to examine, it is very unlikely that the trial can be commenced and concluded within a reasonable period.

14. As such, further detention of the applicants as an under trial prisoner, in the circumstances of the case, does not seem to be either warranted or justifiable. I am, therefore, persuaded to exercise the discretion in favour of the applicants. The apprehension expressed by the learned APP about tampering with the prosecution evidence can be adequately taken care of by imposing stringent conditions.

15. Hence, the following order:

**ORDER**

- (I) Application is **allowed**.
- (II) Applicants – **Pradeep Keshav Rathod, Keshav Kalu Rathod** and **Tarabai Keshav Rathod** be released on regular bail on furnishing P.R. bond of Rs.

50,000/- (Fifty Thousand Only) with one or two local solvent sureties in the like amount, in Crime No. 291 of 2025 registered with MIDC Paithan Police Station, Dist. Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar for the offences punishable under Sections 85, 80(2), 108, 115(2), 352, 351(2), 3(5) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, on the following conditions :-

- (a) The applicants shall attend each and every date of the Trial Court unless exempted by the Trial Court.
  - (b) The applicants shall not pressurize the prosecution witnesses and shall not tamper with the prosecution evidence, in any manner.
  - (c) The applicants shall submit his Aadhar and Pan Card to the Investigation Officer and detailed addresses and phone numbers of applicants and two of the near relatives.
  - (d) Breach of any of the conditions by the applicants would entail the cancellation of the bail.
- (iii) Needless to states that the observations rendered herein are to the extent of this application and the trial court shall not be influenced by the same.

**(SACHIN S. DESHMUKH, J.)**