IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT BOMBAY
CIRCUIT BENCH AT KOLHAPUR
CRIMINAL APPELLATE JURISDICTION

CRIMINAL BAIL APPLN. NO. 3740 OF 2025

TEJAS RAHUL BHALERAO
VERSUS
THE STATE OF MAHARASHTRA
***
Advocate for Applicant : Mr. Navtej S. Desai a/w Mr. Narayan S. Rajebhosale, Mr. Aniket R. Shingare
APP for Respondent-State : Mr. A. S. Shalgaonkar
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CORAM : SACHIN S. DESHMUKH, J.
Date : 8th April, 2026

ORDER :-

1. The applicant has approached this Court seeking regular bail in connection with FIR dated 27.05.2025 bearing Crime No. 378 of 2025 registered with Rajarampuri Police Station, Dist. Kolhapur for the offences punishable under Sections 316(2), 318(4), 351(2), 3(5) of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 alongwith Section 66(c), 66(d) and 43 of Information and Technology Act, 2000.

2. The prosecution's case is that the first informant and her husband, retired professors in Kolhapur, were defrauded of Rs.3,57,23,000/- through a digital arrest scam. On 18.04.2025, an unknown caller posing as a police officer from the "TRAI

Department, Colaba" falsely informed the informant that her Aadhaar card was implicated in a Rs. 6 Crore money laundering case involving Naresh Goyal. To further the deception, the accused initiated a WhatsApp video call featuring individuals in a staged "Mumbai Police" and virtual court setting. Coerced by fear and under the pretext of an RBI "verification" process, the informant was induced to share her bank details and transfer the aforementioned sum via 11 separate RTGS and NEFT transactions to various accounts.

5. The learned counsel for the applicant submits that the applicant has been falsely implicated in the present crime. It is submitted that the applicant is not named in the FIR, and his name only surfaced during the course of the investigation, based on statements of co-accused. The alleged offences are triable by the Judicial Magistrate First Class Court. As the investigation is complete and the charge sheet has been filed, further incarceration of the applicant is not necessary. Hence, it is prayed that the application be allowed.

6. The learned APP has opposed the application and submitted that the crime is serious in nature and there is sufficient

material on record to establish the complicity of the applicants. If the applicant is enlarged on bail, there is every possibility of tampering with the prosecution evidence. Hence, it is prayed that the application be rejected.

7. Considering the submissions of both sides and a perusal of the record, including the charge-sheet, the FIR was lodged against unknown persons and the name of the present applicant surfaced only during the subsequent investigation on the basis of a statement of a co-accused. While the prosecution alleges the applicant’s involvement in a massive fraud involving Rs. 3,57,23,000/-, prima facie in absence of evidence on record to indicate that the applicant was one of the three individuals who played a direct role in orchestrating the digital arrest of the informant application warrants consideration.

8. Moreover, the role attributed to the applicant prima facie appears to be that of a secondary nature. Since the evidence is primarily documented in bank records and electronic trails, there is no risk of the applicant tampering with such evidence, if released on bail.

9. The alleged offences are triable by the learned JMFC

Court. Nevertheless, the investigation is complete for all intent and purpose and the charge-sheet is filed. Having regard to the number of witnesses which the prosecution proposes to examine, it is very unlikely that the trial can be commenced and concluded within a reasonable period. The arrest of the applicant has been effected on 05.06.2025 and since then, he is in jail.

10. As such, further detention of the applicant 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 applicant. The apprehension expressed by the learned APP about tampering with the prosecution evidence can be adequately taken care of by imposing stringent conditions. Hence, the applicant deserves to be enlarged on bail by imposing stringent conditions. Hence, the following order: :-

ORDER

(I) Application is **allowed**.

(II) Applicant – Tejas Rahul Bhalerao 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. 378 of 2025 registered with Rajarampuri Police Station, Dist.

Kolhapur for the offences punishable under Sections 316(2), 318(4), 351(2), 3(5) of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 alongwith Section 66(c), 66(d) and 43 of Information and Technology Act, 2000, on the following conditions :-

(a) The applicant shall attend each and every date of the Trial Court unless exempted by the Trial Court.

(b) The applicant shall not pressurize the prosecution witnesses and shall not tamper with the prosecution evidence, in any manner.

(c) The applicant shall submit his Aadhar and Pan Card to the Investigation Officer and detailed addresses and phone numbers of applicant and two of the near relatives.

(d) Breach of any of the conditions by the applicant 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.)

Omkar Joshi