IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT BOMBAY
CRIMINAL APPELLATE JURISDICTION
ANTICIPATORY BAIL APPLICATION NO.2455 OF 2025

Manisha Navnath Labhde …Applicants
Versus
The State of Maharashtra …Respondent

Mr. Ranjit Gangadhar Jadhav, for the Applicant.
Mr. S. V. Walve, APP a/w Mr. Shahaji Shinde, APP, "B" Panel, for the Respondent-State.

CORAM: MADHAV J. JAMDAR, J.
DATED: 12 OCTOBER 2026

PC:-

1. Heard Mr. Jadhav, learned Counsel appearing for the Applicant and Mr. Walve, learned APP, for the Respondent-State of Maharashtra.

2. By this Anticipatory Bail Application filed under Section 482 of the *Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023*, the Applicant is seeking pre-arrest bail in connection with CR No.48 of 2025 registered with Yeola Taluka Police Station, Nashik Rural, for the offences punishable under Sections 420, 406, 409, 120B & 34 of the *Indian Penal Code, 1860*.

3. Mr. Jadhav, learned Counsel appearing for the Applicant submits that by the Order dated 1st December 2025 the Applicant

has been granted ad-interim protection. He submits that the Charge-sheet was also filed on 19th October 2025. He further submits that the FIR was lodged on the basis of an Audit-Report for the period of 29th June 2023 to 10th July 2023. He submits that the said Audit-Report has been set aside by the Order dated 21st July 2025 passed by the Director, Local Fund Accounts Audit Department, Government of Maharashtra. He, therefore, submits that the Applicant be granted pre-arrest bail.

4. On the other hand, Mr. Walve, learned APP, for the Respondent-State, submits that the offence is very serious where there is a misappropriation of the public money and, therefore, the Anticipatory Bail Application be rejected.

5. The prosecution case is set out in Paragraph No.2 of the Order dated 7th August 2025 passed by the learned Additional Sessions Judge, Yeola in Criminal Bail Application No.137 of 2025, which reads as under:

> "*2. Complainant Bharat Mohite, who is Development Officer, of Gram Panchayat Samiti, Yeola, lodged the report/FIR on 28/01/2025 by stating that fraud was revealed in the transactions related to Scheduled Tribes, Baudha Vasti Vikas Yojana and Anganwadi during 2017 to 2018, 2021 to 2022. The said amount of fraud is*

worth Rs.75,17,095/-. At the relevant time during 2017-18 to 2021-22, the applicant was Sarpanch and Mahesh Ramdas Mahale was a GramSevak. He has pointed out that the fraud amount is Rs.1,89,75,521/- as revealed in the Audit Report and further directed to lodge FIR and also recover the said amount. In the inquiry it was revealed that during 2017 to 2022 there was huge fraud worth Rs.1,01,00,840/- had taken place in respect of Gram Nidhi, Gramin PaniPurwatha, Nimgaon and 14th and 15th Vitta Aayog. During the inquiry it was further revealed that an amount of Rs.6,28,964/- was tallied. However, an amount of Rs.4,97,033/- could not be tallied. Amount of Rs.19,40,446/-and valuation thereof could not be traced out and an amount of Rs.70,34,387/- was spent without estimate. In totality fraud of Rs.4,82,708/- and 70,34,387/- was revealed. It is also revealed that the applicant and then Gramsevak Mahesh Mahale committed fraud and misappropriated Rs.37,51,735/- and 37,65,360/- respectively, total Rs.75,17,095/-. On the basis of above facts complainant approached to Yeola Taluka Police Station and lodged the report on that basis Crime No.48 of 2025 registered against the applicant and co-accused Mahesh Ramdas Mahale."

6. Perusal of the record shows that the FIR was lodged on the basis of the Audit-Report. However, the said Audit-Report has been set aside by the Order dated 21st July 2025 passed by the Director, Local Fund Accounts Audit Department, Government of Maharashtra.

7. In any case, the Charge-sheet has been filed. The Applicant has been protected by the Order dated 1st December 2025.

8. Accordingly, in the facts and circumstances, case is made out for grant of anticipatory bail.

9. In view thereof, the following Order is passed:

O R D E R

(a) In the event of arrest of Applicant - Manisha Navnath Labhde in connection with CR No.48 of 2025 registered with Yeola Taluka Police Station, Nashik Rural, the Applicant is directed to be released on bail on her furnishing PR Bond in the sum of Rs.50,000/- with one or two solvent sureties in the like amount.

(b) The Applicant shall attend the concerned Police Station, as and when necessary and shall cooperate with the investigation.

(c) The Applicant shall furnish her cell phone number and residential address to the Investigating Officer and shall keep the same updated, in case of any change thereto.

(d) The Applicant 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 such a person from disclosing the facts to the Court or to any Police personnel.

(e) The Applicant shall not tamper with the prosecution evidence and shall not contact or influence the Complainant or any witness in any manner.

(f) The Applicant shall not leave India without prior permission of the Court.

10. The Anticipatory Bail Application is disposed of accordingly.

[MADHAV J. JAMDAR, J.]