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IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT BOMBAY
CRIMINAL APPELLATE JURISDICTION

WRIT PETITION NO. 1585 OF 2023

WITH

INTERIM APPLICATION NO. 4330 OF 2025

Vishnu Ramchandra Bhagwat]
Age: 43 years, Occ.: Business]
Add: 3rd Floor, Business Court,]
Govind Nagar, Nashik] … Petitioner

V/s.

1. State of Maharashtra (Through]
Director General of Police)]

2. State of Maharashtra (Through]
Economic Offence Wing, Nashik)]

3. State of Maharashtra (Through]
Economic Offence Wing, Pune)]

4. State of Maharashtra (Through]
Economic Offence Wing, Dhule)]

5. State of Maharashtra]
(Through Sonia Police Station)]

6. State of Maharashtra]
(Through Pathardi Police Station)]

7. State of Maharashtra (Through Ambad]
Police Station)]

8. State of Maharashtra (Through]
Jaikheda Police Station)]

9. State of Maharashtra (Through Phaltan]
Police Station)]

10. State of Maharashtra (Through Parali]
Police Station)]

11. State of Maharashtra (Through Bhandup Police Station)]

12. State of Maharashtra (Through Ulhasnagar Police Station)]

13. Mr. Raman Khandu Birhade]
Add: S. No 26/2, Plot No 16,]
Bholenath Nagar, Patonda Road,]
Nandurbar – 425412]

14. Mr. Shyamkarn Bhanudas Hon.]
Add: Vaani Society, Takali Road, Near]
ZP Hospital Kopargaon,]
Teh. Kopargaon,]
Dist: Ahmednagar – 423601]

15. Mr. Krushna Bhujangrao Ware]
Add: Plot number 26/9, Krushna]
Prabha Bungalow, Near Maruti Mandir,]
Anand Nagar Pathardi, Tal: Pathardi,]
Dist: Ahmednagar – 414001]

16. Mr. Mayur Sunil Pawar]
Add: Pawar Vasti, Near Ganpati]
Temple, Lachke flour mill, Paregav]
Road Bajirao Nagar, Tel: Yeola,]
Nashik – 423401]

17. Mr. Dhananjay Bhimrao Sawant]
Add: Mandave, Malshiras]
Dist: Solapur – 413111]

18. Mr. Dada Mahadev Mane]
Add: Mukti Sankul Apartment, Phase]
1, Flat No 2, Tambe Nagar, MIDC,]
Baramati Dist: Pune – 413133]

19. Mr. Nanasaheb Ashok Paighan]
Add: Laxmi Nivas Bungalow, Mauli]
Colony, Tukaram Nagar, Talwade]
Village Tel: Haveli, Dist: Pune 411062]

20. Mr. Rohidas Shantaram Hajare]
Add: Lakshadweep Society, Sector 3,]
Indrayani Nagar, Bhosari,]

Pune – 411026]

21. Mr. Sambhaji Bhikaji Chavan Add:]
Swan Mills, Room No. 2003, Tokarshi]
Jivraj Road, Sewri,]
Mumbai – 400015]

22. Mr. Kiran Rohidas Bhapkar]
Add: Loni Bhapkar, Tel. Baramati]
Dist: Pune – 413110]

23. Mr. Sunil Khanderao Adke]
Add: Anusaya Apartment, Flat No: 05,]
Kalanagar, Nashik Road]
Nashik – 422214]

24. Mr. Karan Pandharinath Gaikar]
Add: Jijayi Niwas, Shivaji Nagar,]
Satpur, Nashik – 422007]

25. Mr. Chandrakant Tatyaba Chahal]
Add: Plot No 703, 7th Floor, J/1,]
Iris Mohan Pride, Khadakpada,]
Kalyan (W), Dist: Thane – 421301]

26. Mr. Santosh Sudam Korade]
Add: Bori Budruk, Tel- Junnar,]
Dist- Pune 412411]

27. Mr. Vishal Muralidhar Supekar]
Add: Nighoj, ST Stand nearby,]
Tal: Parner,]
Dist: Ahmednagar – 414306]

28. Mr. Nilesh Janardan Kumbhar]
Add: Bhairav Apartment, Room No]
105, Near Market Yard, Manchar]
Tal: Ambegaon, Dist: Pune – 410503]

29. Mr. Ravindra Barikrao Patil]
Add: Plot No. 15, Shree Ram, Near]
Kanya School, Laxmi Nagar, Meharun]
Village, Plot No. 28, Yashwant Nagar,]
Ramanandnagar,]
Dist: Jalgaon – 425003]

30. Mr. Rupchand Ramchand Bhagwat]
Add:Gavandgaon, Raste Suregaon]
Yeola, Dist: Nashik – 423402]

31. Mr. Mukesh Ramchandra Pardeshi]
Add: Pardeshi Niwas, Giridhar Nagar,]
Kongaon, Tal: Bhiwandi]
Dist: Thane – 421311]

32. Mauli Multi State Co operative Society]
Ltd. Add: 3rd Floor, Business Court,]
Govind Nagar, Nashik – 422009]

33. Mrs. Sapna Sandeep Ambekar]
Add: Mehunbare, Tal: Chalisgaon,]
Dist: Jalgaon, Maharashtra,]
India – 424106]

34. Mr. Bhaiyyasaheb Yashwant Gujela]
Add: Dhule, Tal: Dhule]
Maharashtra – 424001]

35. Mr. Rajendra Wamanrao Deshmukh]
Add: Kotul, Tal: Akole,]
Ahmednagar, Maharashtra,]
India – 422610]

36. Mr. Pravin Gangadhar Kavade]
Add: Kotul, Tal: Akole]
Ahmednagar, Maharashtra,]
India 422610]

37. Mr. Shantaram Ashok Devtarse]
Add: Kanehara Vasti, Navarang, Sonai]
Ahmednagar, Maharashtra,]
India 414105]

38. Sankalp Siddhi Products India Pvt Ltd.]
Add: 3rd Floor, Business Court, Govind]
Nagar, Nashik – 422 009]

39. Mr. Raghuvansh Kumar Omprakash]
Singh,]
Add: Matoshree SRA, A Wing, 10th]
Floor, Flat No. 1004, Jerabai Wadia]
Road, Parel, Bhoiwada,]
Mumbai – 400012]

40. Mr. Prakash Appasaheb Nanaware]
Add: 44, Phata, Boraste Vasti, Natepute]
Malshiras, Solapur – 413107]

41. Ujjvalam Agro Multistate Co.op]
Directors of The Society,]
Add: 3rd Floor, Business Court,]
Govind Nagar, Nashik – 422009]

42. Mr. Nitin Dhanaji Sawant]
Add: A/p, Dahigaon, Natepute,]
Malshiras Taluka,]
Dist: Solapur – 413109]

43. Mr. Javed Hanif Shaikh]
Add: At post, RK Nagar, Satana Taluka]
Nashik – 423301]

44. Mr. Bilal Maniyaar,]
Add: Plot No 160, Prashant Row]
House, Bhadrapad Sector, New Cidco]
Nashik – 422501]

45. Mr. Ganesh Sonawane]
Add: Swaminarayan Bungalow No 1,]
Near Guru Govind Singh College]
Indira Nagar, Nashik – 422009]

46. Mr. Abhijeet Yerurkar]
Add: Plot No 9, Aishwarya Vihar,]
Anandwan Colony, Ambad Link Road,]
Cidco, Nashik – 422010]

47. Mr. Praful Nistane]
Add: Flat No 302, 3rd Floor, Vinayak]
Pride Apartments, Dnyaneshwar Nagar,]
Pathardi Shivar, Nashik – 422010]

48. Mr. Bhaiyya Dilip Ahire]
Add: Padalde, Tal: Dhule]
Dhule – 424002]

49. Mr. Omnarayan Chandlal Jaiswal]
Add: Jaiswal Complex, Station Road]
Parali Beed – 431515]

50. Mrs. Sangita Omnarayan Jaiswal]
Add: Jaiswal Complex, Station Road]
Parali Beed – 431515]

51. Mr. Suresh Shantaram Ghangale]
Add: A/P Talegaon, Dhabade,]
Near General Hospital, Maval Taluka]
Pune – 410506]

52. Mr. Omprakash Sakaraj Singh]
Add: Matoshree SRA Apartment,]
A Wing, 10th Floor, Flat No 1004,]
Wadiya Road, Ulhasnagar,]
Thane – 421002]

53. Brijbhan Sahti Pashi]
At Post, Govandi, Ulhasnagar,]
Thane, Mumbai – 400043]

54 Mrs. Sarika Bapu Sonavane]
Add: Shahi Amrut Avenue A,]
Prashant Nagar, Pathardi Phata]
Nashik – 422010]

55. Mr. Mohit Baburao Sonavane]
Add: Shahi Amrut Avenue A, Prashant]
Nagar, Pathardi Phata,]
Nashik – 422010]

56. Mr. Vinod Sayyaji Chavan]
Add: Devala, Tal: Devala]
Dist: Nashik – 423102]

57. Mr. Sanjay Modekar]
Add: Flat No 4024, 4th Floor]
Sarvoday Kirti, D R Nemade Galli,]
Old Dombivli, Dombivli (W) Kalyan,]
Vishnu Nagar, Kalyan, Thane- 421202.]

58. Mr. Uttam Maruti Bamane]
Add: Room No. 2413, B Wing Swan]
Mill, Mahada Tower Tokarshi Jivraj]
Road, Sewri, Mumbai- 400015.]

59. Mr. Anant Gore]
Add: Sunshine Navgoan E 2 Co-]
operative Society, Flat G001, Ground]

Floor, Diyas Parera Nagar,]
Navgoan (W) Tel- N Vasai,]
Dist- Palghar, 401207.]

60. Mr. Kashiram Yashwant Parab]
Add: Room No 301, A Wing, Shripal]
Vishesh, Building No 2, Near Bharat]
Gas Agency, Nalasopara,]
Palghar- 401203.]

61. Mrs. Kalawati Panchal]
Add: 705 Godrage Amrad, Gaymukh]
Ghodbandar, Thane (W), 400615.]

62. Mr. Madhav Vinakay Jadhav]
Add: C/o Balaso Rajaram Chavan]
Belunkhi, Tel- Jath,]
Dist- Sangli 416402]

63. Mrs. Dipali Kadam]
Add: Flat No. 701, Sukwani Niketan,]
E Wing, Wadhire Colony No 4,]
Pimpari Chichwad, Pune- 411017]

64. State of Maharashtra]
(Through Kolhapur Shahupuri Police]
Station)]

65. State of Maharashtra]
(Through Mulund Police Station)]

66. State of Maharashtra]
(Through Dhule (Taluka) Police]
Station)] …Respondents

Mr. Vikram Parmar i/b. Mr. Sudatta Patil for the Petitioner.

Mr. Ajay S. Patil, APP, for the Respondent -State.

Mr. P.K.Gite, API, Ulhasnagar Police Station, present.

Mr. V.V.Mhaske, PSI, Ulhasnagar Police Station, present.

Ms. Nandini Bansode, API, EOW, Maharashtra State, Mumbai, present.

CORAM : A. S. GADKARI AND
KAMAL KHATA, JJ.
RESERVED ON : 3rd September, 2026.
PRONOUNCED ON : 22nd October, 2026.

Judgment (Per : Kamal Khata, J) :-

1) Rule. Rule made returnable forthwith and heard finally with the consent of the parties.

2) Petitioner is an accused in First Information Report (FIR) registered vide C.R. No. 209 of 2019 with the Economic Offence Wing, (EOW), Nashik. The offences registered against the Petitioner are under Sections 406, 409, 420, 467, 468, 201, 120B, 34 of Indian Penal Code, 1860 (for short, 'IPC') read with Sections 3 and 4 of Maharashtra Protection of Interest of Depositors (in Financial Establishments) Act, 1999 (for short, 'MPID Act') and Sections 4, 5 and 6 of the Prize Chits and Money Circulation Schemes (Banning) Act, 1978 (for short, 'PCMC Act').

3) By this Petition, the Petitioner seeks clubbing of the following ten FIRs :

Sr. No.	FIR No.	Police Station
1.	59/2020	Economic Offence Wing, Dhule
2.	109/2020	Ambad Police Station, Nashik

3.	156/2019	Jaikheda Police Station, Nashik
4.	86/2019	Pathardi Police Station, Ahilyanagar
5.	273/2020	Parali Police Station, Beed
6.	251/2019	Phaltan Police Station, Satara
7.	51/2020	Bhandup Police Station, Mumbai
8.	201/2019	EOW Pune (Aalephata P.S)
9.	16/2021	Sonai Police Station, Ahilyanagar
10.	262/2022	Ulhasnagar Police Station, Thane

4) Mr. Parmar, learned Advocate for the Petitioner, submitted that the Petitioner is the Director and Promoter of the three business entities, namely, (i) Ujjwal Agro Multi State Co-operative Society Private Limited, (ii) Shri Mauli Multi State Credit Co-operative Society Private Limited, and (iii) M/s Sankalp Sidhi Product Private Limited. These entities are engaged in the business of cooperative credit societies and direct selling.

4.1) He submitted that, prior to the registration of the first FIR, there was not even a single complaint against any of the aforesaid entities by any customer. The complaints came to be registered at the instance of one Ganesh Kankal, a self-proclaimed RTI activist who attempted to extort money from the Petitioner. He was not only caught red-handed by the

police while accepting money but the police also found two pistols and 30 live cartridges, in his possession. Offences under Sections 384, 386, 506, 170, 171 and 419 read with Section 25(3) of the Arms Act, 1959 (for short, 'Arms Act') were registered against him vide C.R. No. 113 of 2016.

4.2) After his release, Ganesh Kankal, seeking revenge, launched a campaign against the Petitioner. He lodged a complaint with the Commissioner of Police, Nashik which was eventually closed for want of substance. He thereafter spread misinformation about the Petitioner and his businesses, thereby creating panic amongst the customers/ account holders. Through false representations, he alarmed some of them, into lodging complaints, which led the EOW, Nashik to place a debit freeze on the accounts of the afore-stated entities. The debit freeze severely hampered the Petitioner's business and delayed payments that had until then been made on time. The resulting defaults escalated and gave rise to grievances amongst customers who had previously not raised any complaints. The first FIR being C.R. No. I-209/2019 was registered with Mumbai Naka Police Station, Nashik and was investigated by EOW, Nashik.

4.3) Learned Advocate submitted that, although the alleged crime amount was Rs. 5.87 crores, the Petitioner's bank accounts, properties, vehicles, and other assets, valued at more than Rs.40 crore, have been attached by the Investigating Agency.

4.4) Learned Advocate submitted that, all ten FIRs rest on identical

allegations and the Petitioner has been granted either regular or anticipatory bail in each of them. Each FIR alleges that the Petitioner accepted deposits from the Complainants on the promise of high returns and after making part payments, stopped paying altogether, whereupon the Complainants lodged the FIRs for non-repayment of their deposits.

4.5) Learned Advocate further submitted that the Petitioner had been in custody for more than four years since the registration of the first FIR and that, despite this, attempts continue to be made to file fresh complaints against him. Petitioner has been subjected to multiple prosecutions solely in his capacity as the Director and Promoter of the aforesaid three business entities.

4.6) Learned Advocate submitted that, if the FIRs are permitted to be prosecuted before ten different Courts, the Petitioner will have to defend himself in each of them, although the allegation in all the FIRs is substantially the same, namely, the role played by the Petitioner as the Director and Promoter of the aforesaid entities. He therefore prayed that, in the interest of justice, all the FIRs be clubbed together and tried at one place before one Court.

4.7) In support of his contentions, learned Advocate relied upon the judgments in the cases of *T.T. Antony v. State of Kerala & Others*[1]; and *Radhey Shyam v. State of Haryana & Ors.,*[2].

1. *(2001) 6 SCC 181*
2. 2022 SCC OnLine SC 1935

5) We have heard learned Advocate for the Petitioner, Mr. Parmar, and learned APP for the Respondent-State and have also perused the entire record.

6) The law on clubbing of FIRs and transferring them to a Special Court for a common trial in offences registered under a similar scheme floated by a particular company or a group of companies is now well settled.

7) The Hon'ble Supreme Court in *State (NCT) of Delhi v Khimji Bhai Jadeja*[3] while considering the law so far, in paragraph 16, held as under :

> *"In Amanat Ali v. State of Karnataka, reported in 2023 14 SCC 801 following the ratio decidendi in Amish Devgan v Union of India reported in 2021 1 SCC 1, this Court exercised power under Article 142 of the Constitution and consolidated six FIRs registered in the State to be tried together, as multiplicity of proceedings would not be in the larger public interest or in the interest of the State. Again, in Ravinder Singh Sidhu v. State of Punjab, reported in 2025 SCC OnLine SC 1164 this Court observed that it is now fairly well settled that multiplicity of proceedings would not be in the larger public interest and the correct course of action would be to merge the later FIRs with the earliest FIR with the State's consent.*

3. 2026 SCC OnLine 19

> *On the same lines, in Alok Kumar v. State of Bihar, reported in 2025 SCC OnLine SC 1728 this Court noted that 81 FIRs were registered and directed the first FIR to be treated as the main FIR and all other FIRs to be treated as statements under Section 161 CrPC. Earlier, in Satinder Singh Bhasin v. State of Uttar Pradesh, reported in 2023 14 SCC 805 a 3-Judge Bench of this Court followed the principle enunciated in Amish Devgan (supra) and clubbed, with consent, the 118 FIRs relating to the Bike Bot scheme registered across the State of Uttar Pradesh and one FIR registered by the Economic Offences Wing, New Delhi, by exercising power under Article 142 of the Constitution. Before that, in Radhey Shyam v. State of Haryana, reported in 2022 SCC OnLine SC 1935 the very same 3-Judge Bench took note of multiple FIRs in connection with a network marketing scheme in as many as 12 States and directed the clubbing of all the FIRs, which could thereafter proceed to one trial as far as possible, duly noting that all the States concerned voiced no objection to such course of action.*"

8) The aforesaid judgments' set out the salient features that necessitated the transfer of FIRs to a Single Court. The Hon'ble Supreme Court in *Alok Kumar* (supra) has held that, the first FIR is to be treated as the main FIR and all other FIRs to be treated as statements under Section 161 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973, (for short, 'Cr.PC').

9) In the present case, we find that the allegations in all ten FIRs

are substantially the same. Each FIR alleges that the Petitioner accepted deposits from the Complainants on the promise of high returns and after making part payments, the Petitioner stopped paying altogether, leading to lodgment of FIRs for non-repayment of their deposits.

10) In our view, clubbing of FIRs would facilitate the efficient administration of justice to expedite the trial of all the cases mentioned above.

11) Following the principles laid down by the Apex Court in the above cases, we deem it fit to allow the Petition in terms of prayer clauses (a), (b), and (c).

12) We direct Registrar (Judicial-I) to forward a copy of this judgment to all the Courts where charge-sheets have been filed, in order to transfer all such cases to the Court trying the case arising out of in C.R. No. 209 of 2019 registered with Mumbai Naka Police Station, Nashik.

13) With regard to the recording of evidence of witnesses / investors, the learned Judge of Trial Court may consider permitting them to give evidence through video conferencing, if deemed appropriate.

13.1) In cases where witnesses remain physically present, the Court would ensure that the witnesses are not required to repeatedly attend the Court for recording of evidence.

14) In all cases where the witnesses are required to remain physically present in Court, the Petitioner shall bear the expenses of all

modes of travel, food and stay (if required) to be incurred by the witnesses. It is clarified that the Petitioner shall provide the First Class or Second Class Air-Conditioned train tickets, whichever is cheaper, Rs. 2,000/- per day for food and stay in at least 'A-Grade' hotel.

15) The exercise of transferring the cases to the Court at Nashik shall be completed, preferably within a period of 30 days from the date of uploading of this Judgment on the official website of High Court of Bombay.

16) In view of this Judgment, pending Interim Application filed therein stands disposed off.

17) Petition is accordingly allowed and Rule is made absolute in the above terms.

(KAMAL KHATA, J.) (A.S. GADKARI, J.)