

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT BOMBAY
CRIMINAL APPELLATE JURISDICTION

CRIMINAL BAIL APPLICATION NO. 3402 of 2025

Mahendrakumar Okharam Meghwal ...Applicant
Versus
The State of Maharashtra ...Respondent

WITH

CRIMINAL BAIL APPLICATION NO. 4785 of 2025

Pabbati Murali Krishna ...Applicant
Versus
The State of Maharashtra ...Respondent

Mr. Aalekh Wagh a/w Akshay Jadhav for the Applicant in B.A. 3402/2025.

Mr. Aparna Devkar a/w Annuradha Khot for the Applicant in BA. 4785/2025.

Ms. S.D. Shinde APP, for the Respondent-State.

Mr. Vinit Kadam, P.I. V.P Road Police Station.

CORAM:

R. M. JOSHI, J.

RESERVED ON

20th APRIL, 2026

PC:-

PRONOUNCED ON

22nd APRIL, 2026

1. By these Applications, the Applicants seek bail in connection with C.R. No. 26 of 2025 for the offences punishable under Sections 178, 179, 180, 3(5), 61(2), 111 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 (for short "BNS"), registered at V.P. Road Police Station, Mumbai.

2. Since both Applications involve similar facts, by consent of both sides, they are heard and decided together.

3. On the intervening night of January 06, 2025, at approximately 2:00 AM, the Applicant, Mahendrakumar Okharam Meghwal, along with co-accused Laxman Babulal Devasi, was apprehended by officers of the V.P. Road Police Station during a routine patrol in the Gulalwadi area of Mumbai. Following a personal search conducted on the grounds of allegedly suspicious behavior, the police recovered ten bundles of counterfeit Indian currency notes in the denomination of ₹500/- totaling ₹5,00,000/- from the possession of the Applicant, and eleven similar bundles totaling ₹5,50,000/- from the co-accused. A subsequent examination by the authorities revealed that the currency was partially printed and counterfeit, leading to the registration of FIR No. 26/2025 under Sections 178, 179, 180, 3(5), 61(2), and 111 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS). Applicant Pabbati came to be arrested in connection with the present crime.

4. In short it is the prosecution's case that a conspiracy originated in Hyderabad, where the Applicant and the co-accused were reportedly recruited by individuals identified as Pravinkumar Mali and Jalaram for the distribution of counterfeit currency. It is alleged that on December 25, 2024, the accused were tasked with delivering the illicit funds to a recipient in Malad identified as Hira Singh. Subsequently, on January 04, 2025, while the Applicant was in his native village in Rajasthan, he was purportedly directed to return to Mumbai to retrieve the same package from Hira Singh. The Applicant arrived in Mumbai on January 05, 2025, collected the bag at Gulalwadi Circle around 6:00 PM, and was arrested while returning to his hotel later that night.

5. In support of this bail application, the Applicant maintains his innocence, asserting that he lacked *mens rea* as he was under the *bona fide* impression that the package contained legitimate hardware or electrical items. The Applicant further highlights significant procedural discrepancies, including an unexplained delay in the

registration of the FIR and the failure of the investigating agency to array Hira Singh-the alleged primary handler of the currency as an accused. Given that the Applicant is a 22-year-old with no prior criminal record, and considering that the chargesheet has already been filed with no further recovery pending, his continued incarceration is contended to be unwarranted and prejudicial to the interests of justice.

6. Learned counsel for the applicant Mahendrakumar submits that after conclusion of investigation and with filing of chargesheet further custody of the applicant is not warranted. It is also claimed that this applicant has no criminal history and he is not likely to flee from justice.

7. Learned counsel for the applicant-Pabbati submits that there is no evidence collected during the course of investigation showing nexus of applicant with present crime. It is claimed that there is no contact/communication between applicant and co-accused i.e. applicant in another application. It is claimed that there is no recovery of any incriminating material against the applicant. It is claimed that merely

because there are other crimes registered against the applicant, he cannot deny bail. On these amongst contention other contentions bail is sought.

8. Learned APP opposed application by contending that there is evidence to show concerted acts on the part of applicants and co-accused in serious crime of printing of counterfeit currency and its circulations. It is claimed that the offence directly affects the economy of country and when there is evidence against applicants and there are likely to commit crime if enlarged on bail, they are not entitled for bail.

9. At the outset, this court would like to deal with the contention of the learned counsel for applicant in criminal bail application no. 3402 of 2025 that the grounds of arrest were not communicated to the accused as they were mentioned in marathi language and the applicant being from Rajasthan did not know marathi language hence he did not know the grounds of arrest at the time. Insofar as the communication of the grounds of arrest is concerned, this court would like to

rely on the case of ***Sri Darshan Vs Union Of India***, wherein the Hon'ble Supreme Court held that irregularity in non communication of grounds of arrest would not result in a ground for grant of bail as it is merely a procedural lapse. It is pertinent to note that the applicant was duly represented by counsel and the said contention was not raised during the remand or in course of bail application. Moreover, no prejudice is shown to have been caused by applicants for want of the knowledge of grounds of arrest.

10. Insofar as the grounds (a), (b) and (c) of the applicant in criminal bail application no. 3402 of 2025 are concerned which contends that the applicant was is being falsely implicated in the present case and that the applicant was under the genuine impression that he was carrying mechanical tools and not fake currency notes and that he has nothing to do with the present case. Upon perusal of the charge sheet it could be observed that on 05/01/2025 that is a day before the arrest of the applicant on 06/01/2025, the applicant was in the same vicinity as the co-accused and the

applicant Pabbati Murali Krishna which proves the nexus between both. There cannot be dispute made with regard to the fact that Applicant-Mahendrakumar was found carrying fake currency of RS. 5,50,000/-. Thus his involvement in the crime cannot be *prima-facie* denied.

11. Though the applicant- Pabbati was not initially named in the FIR however, the statements on record of the witness shopkeeper coupled with the CDR and SDR, *prima-facie* establishes his involvement in crime.

12. It is also important to note that the present applicant-Pabbati in CR. BA No. 4785 of 2025, also has several antecedents against him in the past which creates a doubt in the mind of this court regarding non commission of future offences. It is also important to note the fact that the present applicant is already undergoing trial under the learned sessions court of Hyderabad. *Prima-facie* perusal of the case also reveals that the present applicant also applied for a bail under the learned sessions court in the month of November which was also rejected by the court.

13. *Prima-facie*, material on record indicates that the present case is of counterfeiting of notes and its circulation, in systematic and in organised manner. Needless to say that it is a serious economic crime against the country. This offence would not only affect individuals who would be deceived to accept fake currency but it has also serious adverse effect on nation's prosperity.

14. The aforestated reasons do not permit this Court to enlarge the applicants on bail. Instead learned Trial Court is requested to expedite the trial. The applicants for bail therefore, stand rejected.

15. The observations made here-above are *prima-facie* in nature and won't bind parties or Trial Court during trial.

(R. M. JOSHI, J.)