IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT BOMBAY

CRIMINAL APPELLATE JURISDICTION

ANTICIPATORY BAIL APPLICATION NO.3173 OF 2025

Rangrao Anandrao *alias* Ananda Khondre …Applicant

Versus

The State of Maharashtra & Anr. …Respondents

Mr. Abhishek T. Ingale, for the Applicant.
Mr. S. M. Mangaonkar, APP, for the Respondent-State.
Ms. Sairuchita Chowdhary a/w Aakash R. Pandey, for Respondent No.2.
P.S.I. Kashiraj Vitthal Jadhav, Baramati Taluka Police Station, Pune Rural, present.

CORAM: MADHAV J. JAMDAR, J.
DATED: 05 FEBRUARY 2026

PC:-

1. Heard Mr. Ingale, learned Counsel appearing for the Applicant, Mr. Mangaonkar, learned APP for the Respondent-State of Maharashtra and Ms. Chowdhary, learned Counsel appearing for Respondent No.2.

2. By the present 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.172 of 2025 registered with the Baramati Police Station, Pune Rural, for the offences punishable under Sections 316(2), 316(5), 318(2), 318(3), 318(4), 319(2), 351(2), 351(3), 336(2), 336(3) and 3(5) of the *Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023.*

3. The prosecution case is set out in Paragraph No.2 of the Common Order dated 13th June 2025 passed by the learned Additional Sessions Judge, Baramati, District-Pune in Criminal Bail Application No.418 of 2025 and Criminal Bail Application No.419 of 2025 filed by the Accused No.1 i.e. present Applicant and Accused No.2, which reads as under :-

> "*2. As per FIR the prosecution story is as follows:-*
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> *The informant lodged report, alleging that, Nandini Agrotech Private Limited is a company engaged in Milk business and its allied products. Informant Sau. Padmini Sonawane is a director of said company. Mr. Chandrashekhar Laxman Sonawane is another director of the company. In the month of January 2024 Mr. Chandrashekhar Sonawane became acquainted with Rangrao Anandrao Alias Ananda Khondre (Accused No.1/applicant) and Mr. Vipul Vikas Kulkarni (Accused No.2/applicant) out of business transactions. Accused No.1/applicant represented to Mr. Chandrashekhar Sonawane that, he runs a company at Kolhapur and he may be taken as an additional director in the company of informant, for expansion of business and progress of the company. He also assured that, he is ready to invest non-refundable capital amounts, and he will remain nominal director. Accordingly, accused No.1 taken as an additional director in Nandini Agrotech Pvt. Ltd.. So as to win over confidence of both directors, accused No.1 had paid an amount of Rs. 83,00,000/- towards capital.*

While acting as additional director accused no. 1 gave proposal that, we would arrange capital upto Rs. 10 Crores, 20 Crores for expansion of business of the company. Both directors neglected said proposal. Again in the month of June 2024 accused No.1 personally visited office of company at Baramati and had a discussion with both the directors for expansion of business of company. He gave proposal to start new plant of company at village – Nigve Dumala, Tal. Karveer, Dist. Kolhapur. He also made representation that, Mr. Vipul Vikas Kulkarni - the proprietor of V.R. Traders (Accused No.2) is ready to invest an amount of Rs.2,44,00,000/-. He also made representation that, there is huge collection of milk in the area of Nigve Dumala. Believing the words of accused No.1 company of informant became ready to open new plant. Thereafter, during period of 01/07/2023 to 09/07/2023 as per instructions of accused No.1, accused No.2 had transferred an amount of Rs.2,44,00,000/- in the account of company of informant. It is further alleged that, accused No.1 made representation to both directors of company that, he had selected the plot for new plant of company at Nigve Dumala and for purchasing plot as well as he is in need of money for purchase of machinery, other articles for said plant. Believing the words of accused No.1 an amount of Rs.2,57,37,000/- was transferred in the saving bank account of accused No.1 till 18/07/2024. After about two months the director of company visited village – Nigve Dumala and inquired about new plant, at that time accused No.1 gave evasive answers to Mr. Chandrashekhar Sonawane. On detailed inquiry directors of the company came to know that, accused No.1 is a fraudulent person and he has committed various offences of cheating and fraud and grabbed amount of crores of rupees from various peoples. They also came to know that, 30 to 35 offences of cheating, forgery, cheque bouncing are pending against accused No.1. Mr. Chandrashekhar Sonawane asked accused No.1 what he did of an amount of Rs.2,44,00,000/- and also told that, he has malign the image and reputation of company of informant, on which accused No.1 told that, he is police

> *inspector, he will implicate both directors of company in false case. He also gave threats to kill. Both the directors of company came to know that, accused No.1 and accused No.2 in furtherance of their common intention misused the documents of company of informant, fabricated the documents, got prepared bogus seal in the name of company and obtained loan amount from Bank of Maharashtra, Branch – Kavla Naka, Kolhapur and said amount has been transmitted in the account of company of informant showing their own capital amount. Further as per contention of informant, both accused in furtherance of their common intention, committed forgery, cheating and grabbed amount of Rs. 2,57,37,000/-. The complaint was filed before Judicial Magistrate First Class, Baramati, on which directions were issued under Section 175(3) of B.N.S.S.. On that basis FIR has been registered.*"

4. It is the submission of Mr. Ingale, learned Counsel for the Applicant that the Applicant was appointed as Additional Director of "Nandeeni Agrotech Industries Private Limited" on 15th February 2024. At that time, there were a total of 3 Directors— Applicant, First Informant and First Informant's Husband - Chandrashekhar Sonawane. He submitted that on 21st February 2024 the First Informant resigned from the post of Additional Director. He submitted that the Applicant has transferred a total amount of about Rs.1,26,37,101/- in the Current Account of the Company from time to time, although FIR records that an amount of Rs.83,00,000/- has been transferred. Learned Counsel submits that Accused No.2 has transferred Rs.2,44,00,000/ into the account of the Company in July 2024 as an investment for opening of a new plant. He submits that an amount of Rs.2,57,37,000/- has been paid to the present Applicant towards capital investment and profit on the same and, thereafter, immediately the Applicant resigned as Director on 4th October 2024.

5. Mr. Ingale, learned Counsel submitted that on 10th March 2025, the First Informant filed a Complaint against the present Applicant at Shahupuri Police Station, Kolhapur. Thereafter, a private Complaint has been filed before the learned JMFC, Baramati on 26th March 2025 and the learned JMFC directed registration of a FIR against the present Applicant and Accused No.2. Pursuant to the same, on 5th May 2025, FIR was lodged.

6. Mr. Ingale, learned Counsel submitted that the amount of Rs.2,57,37,000/- which the Applicant had received is towards capital investment and profit on the same. He submits that the same cannot be termed as siphoning off money.

7. Mr. Ingale, learned Counsel, further submitted that the other Director i.e. Husband of the First Informant has not given statement to the Police nor he has lodged any FIR. He submitted that a civil dispute has been converted into a FIR. He submitted that the Applicant will cooperate with the investigation. He submitted that although there are other criminal antecedents, most of the antecedents are arising out of Section 138 of the *Negotiable Instruments Act, 1881* ("**NI Act**") and the antecedents have been disclosed in Paragraph No.15 of Anticipatory Bail Application.

8. On the other hand, Mr. Mangaonkar, learned APP, submitted that the offence is very serious and the Applicant is involved in the crime. He submitted that in view of the nature of the offence, the custodial interrogation is necessary.

9. Ms. Chowdhary, learned Counsel for the First Informant i.e. Respondent No.2, submitted that Accused under the pretext of expansion of the business and under the pretext that he would be putting finance in the Company, became the Director and thereafter siphoned off the said amount of Rs.2,57,37,000/-. She submitted that the Applicant has taken loan from Bank of

Maharashtra by showing the said Company as a borrower. She submitted that for the purpose of siphoning off huge amount the Applicant became the Director of the Company and after siphoning off the amount he has resigned form the Company. She, therefore, submitted that custodial interrogation is necessary. She submitted that 'WhatsApp' chats which the Applicant has annexed to Anticipatory Bail Application, are forged and fabricated.

10. Ms. Chowdhary, learned Counsel pointed out Pages 162-164 of Anticipatory Bail Application and submitted that there are a total of 18 antecedents. She pointed out Paragraph No.15 and submitted that vaguely only 7 antecedents have been mentioned. Learned Counsel relied on the decision of the Supreme Court in ***Munnesh v. State of U.P.*** [1] and more particularly on Paragraph No.12 of the same and submitted that as all the antecedents are not disclosed, Anticipatory Bail Application be dismissed only on that ground.

11. Ms. Chowdhary, learned Counsel also pointed a Distributorship Agreement executed between "Nandeeni Agrotech

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Industries Private Limited" and "M/s. V. R. Traders & Suppliers" and submitted that signature of the Director - Chandrashekhar Laxman Sonawane as appearing on Page 97 is fabricated. Learned Counsel submitted that stamps on the document of a Deed of Simple Mortgage to Secure All Credit Facilities executed by Yogita Rangrao Khondre i.e. Wife of Applicant are forged and fabricated. Learned Counsel therefore submitted that the offence is serious and therefore custodial interrogation is necessary.

12. Perusal of the FIR shows that the Applicant represented that in the Kolhapur district he is conducting a Company and if he is inducted as Additional Director in the Company namely "Nandeeni Agrotech Industries Private Limited", then he would provide finance for expansion of the Company. The FIR records that an amount of Rs.83,00,000/- has been provided by the Applicant. The FIR further states that the Applicant has represented that Accused No.2 - Vipul Vikas Kulkarni of M/s. V. R. Traders & Suppliers is ready to provide finance of Rs.2,44,00,000/- and the said amount was provided in the month of July 2024.

13. Perusal of the record shows that as a guarantee for said loan of Rs.2,44,00,000/-, in fact the properties of Wife of the Applicant i.e. of Yogita Rangrao Khondre were mortgaged with the Bank of Maharashtra.

14. Notice (Exhibit-G, Pages 209-211) issued by the Bank of Maharashtra under the provisions of the *Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002*, shows that loan has been taken by M/s. VR Traders and Suppliers i.e. proprietary concern of Accused No.2 - Vipul Vikas Kulkarni and Guarantors are the Wife of the Applicant i.e. Yogita Rangrao Khondre and another Guarantor is said Nandeeni Agrotech Industries Private Limited.

15. It is also an admitted position that the said loan amount of Rs.2,50,00,000/- was initially received in the account of Accused No.2 - Vipul Vikas Kulkarni, which is the loan amount taken from the Bank of Maharashtra by M/s. V. R. Traders and Suppliers i.e. the proprietary concern of Vipul Vikas Kulkarni. Thereafter, out of said amount of Rs.2,50,00,000/- an amount of Rs.2,44,00,000/-

has been transferred in the account of Nandeeni Agrotech Industries Private Limited.

16. It is the submission of Ms. Chowdhary, learned Counsel that an amount of Rs.2,57,37,000/- has been siphoned off by the present Applicant and, therefore, said amount of Rs.2,44,00,000/- and additional amount has been taken away by the Applicant.

17. It is the submission of Mr. Ingale, learned Counsel for the Applicant that in fact Rs.83,00,000/- has been provided as initial capital amount by the Applicant. Thereafter, certain amounts were provided aggregating to Rs.1,26,37,101/- and said amount of Rs.2,57,37,000/- is the initial capital investment as also profit.

18. In any case, *prima facie*, the dispute is of civil nature. This is a case where, the First Informant is the wife of another Director namely Chandrashekhar Sonawane. Said Chandrashekhar Sonawane has not filed FIR nor has given any statement to the Police.

19. Ms. Chowdhary, learned Counsel for the First Informant at this stage points out a Complaint dated 30th May 2025 (Pages 189-191) filed by the Husband of the First Informant i.e. one of the Director of said Nandeeni Agrotech Industries Private Limited. The said Complaint dated 30th May 2025 lodged by the Director of said Nandeeni Agrotech Industries Private Limited i.e. Chandrashekhar Laxman Sonawane (Husband of the First Informant) mentions that for arranging sanction of loan of Rs.2,50,00,000/-, Rs.10,00,000/- has been accepted by the Applicant and said Vipul Vikas Kulkarni. The contents of the said Complaint dated 30th May 2025 *prima facie* shows that the contents of FIR and contents of said Complaint are in variance with each other.

20. It is also relevant to note that the Applicant was appointed as Additional Director of “Nandeeni Agrotech Industries Private Limited” on 15th February 2024. Within a period of 6 days i.e. on 21st February 2024 the First Informant had resigned from the post of Additional Director. Thereafter, on 3rd October 2024 she has been inducted as Additional Director and on 4th October 2024 the Applicant resigned from the post of Additional Director.

21. There is total variance in the FIR and in the Complaint dated 30th May 2025 filed by the Husband of the First Informant i.e. another Director of said Nandeeni Agrotech Industries Private Limited. It is significant to note that the FIR has been lodged on 5th May 2025 and the said Complaint has been filed by said Chandrashekhar Sonawane on 30th May 2025 (Pages 189-191).

22. Thus, in the facts and circumstances, custodial interrogation is not necessary. Accordingly, the Applicant is entitled for anticipatory bail.

23. There is one more contention which Ms. Chowdhary, learned Counsel for Respondent No.2 has raised regarding disclosure of antecedents. She has relied on the decision of the Supreme Court in ***Munnesh*** (supra) and particularly on Paragraph Nos.12 and 13 of the same, which read as under :-

> "***12.*** *We, accordingly, direct that* ***henceforth each individual who approaches this Court*** *with a Special Leave Petition (Criminal) challenging orders passed by the high courts/sessions courts declining prayers under Sections 438/439 of the Criminal Procedure Code, 1973 or under Sections 482/483, Bharatiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita* ***shall mandatorily disclose in the 'SYNOPSIS' that either he is a man of clean antecedents or if he has***

> ***knowledge of his involvement in any criminal case, he shall clearly indicate the same together with the stage that the proceedings, arising out of such case, have reached. Should the disclosure be found to be incorrect subsequently, that itself could be considered as a ground for dismissal of the special leave petition****.*
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> ***13.*** *We are conscious that complying with this direction could result in inconvenience for some; however, having noticed that orders dated 13th October, 2023 and 19th October, 2023 of this Court in SLP (Crl.) No. 12876 of 2023 and SLP (Crl.) No. 2863 of 2023, respectively, requiring steps to be initiated for eliciting proper and correct information from the individuals seeking orders of regular bail/pre-arrest bail have not produced the desired results,* ***we have proceeded to make the aforesaid direction in the institutional interest so that proceedings before this Court are not taken lightly by those who choose to approach it and the process of law is not abused****.*"
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> (Emphasis added)

24. In this background, it is necessary to set out Paragraph No.15 of the Anticipatory Bail Application, which reads as under :-

> "*15. The Applicant respectfully submits that, as on the date of filing the present Anticipatory Bail Application, there are presently seven criminal proceedings pending against him, out of which six pertain to offences under Section 138 of the Negotiable Instruments Act, 1881, and one pertains to an offence of criminal breach of trust.*"

25. It is required to be noted that the Applicant withdrew the earlier Anticipatory Bail Application bearing No.1967 of 2025 as the learned APP had stated that there is one antecedent and thereafter a fresh Anticipatory Bail Application filed vaguely by stating in Paragraph No.15 about the antecedents.

26. There is substance in the contention raised by Ms. Chowdhary, learned Counsel that said Paragraph No.15 is not in complete compliance with the directions issued by the Supreme Court in the case of ***Munnesh*** (supra).

27. It is required to be noted that the Respondent No.2 along with the Affidavit-in-Reply has annexed a chart giving a list of about 18 antecedents. However, 14 cases are concerning Section 138 of the NI Act. As far as 2 cases mentioned at Serial Nos.17 and 18 are concerned, it is admitted position that both have been compromised and allowed to be withdrawn.

28. Mr. Ingale, learned Counsel for the Applicant, states that as far as a Chart which has been produced at Page Nos.162 to 164, cases mentioned at Serial Nos.3, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 11 are pending cases. However, out of the same, cases at Serial Numbers 3, 6, 7 and 8 are under Sections 138 of the NI Act and only one case is pending and, therefore, the disclosure given by the Applicant is correct.

29. In any case, there is substance in the contention that complete details of the antecedents are not provided. However, it cannot be said that there is complete non-disclosure or non-disclosure is for getting any advantage.

30. Thus, in the facts and circumstances and for the reasons set out herein above, case is made out for grant of anticipatory bail.

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

ORDER

(a) In the event of arrest of the Applicant - Rangrao Anandrao *alias* Ananda Khondre, in connection with CR No.172 of 2025 registered with the Baramati Police Station, Pune Rural, he be released on bail on his furnishing PR Bond in the sum of Rs.1,00,000/- with one or two solvent sureties in the like amount.

(b) The Applicant shall attend the concerned Police Station on 11th February 2026 and 12th February

2026 between 11:00 am to 02:00 pm and thereafter twice in a month i.e. the First and the Third Sunday of every month between 11:00 am to 02:00 pm, till filing of the Charge-sheet and shall cooperate with the investigation.

(c) The Applicant shall furnish his 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 learned Trial Court/Sessions Court.

32. The Anticipatory Bail Application is disposed of accordingly.

33. It is clarified that the observations made in this Order are *prima facie* observations.

[MADHAV J. JAMDAR, J.]