

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT BOMBAY
CRIMINAL APPELLATE JURISDICTION
APPLICATION NO. 504 OF 2026

Prashant Mehta ..Applicant
Versus
The State of Maharashtra and Anr ...Respondents

APPLICATION NO. 505 OF 2026

Prashant Mehta ..Applicant
Versus
The State of Maharashtra and Anr ...Respondents

Mr. Rizwan Merchant, with Devesh Juvekar, Dikshat M, Minal Chandnani, Monish Bhatia, Mithilesh Chalke, H Chandnani, Nisha Panjwani, Rajesh Ranglani, Mohit Jagiasi and Khushboo, i/b Rajani Associates, for the Applicant in APL/504 of 2026 and 505 of 2026.
Adv Lakshmi Raman, with Manisha Prajapati, for Respondent Nos. 2 to 4, in APL/505 of 2026.
Adv Alaukik R Pai, with Omkar K & Suryajeet Ravrane, for Respondent No.2 in APL/504/2026.
Mr. D.J. Haldankar, APP, for the Respondent-State in both APLs.

CORAM: N. J. JAMADAR, J.
DATE : 18th MARCH 2026

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RAMCHANDRA
SANKPAL

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P.C.:

- 1.** Heard the learned Counsel for the parties.
- 2.** The challenge in these Applications is to an order dated 6th March 2026, whereby the learned Additional Sessions Judge, Mazgaon, has stayed the order passed by the learned Magistrate, Bandra, Mumbai, on 8th December 2025, issuing process against the private Respondents for

the offence punishable under Section 3 (1)(2)(3) of the Maharashtra Prevention and Eradication of Human Sacrifice and Other Inhuman, Evil and Aghori Practices and Black Magic Act, 2013.

3. The grievance of the Applicant-original Complainant is that by an order dated 23rd February 2026, a co-ordinate Bench of this Court, in Criminal Revision No. 467 of 2025, has directed the learned Magistrate to expedite the trial and dispose of the matter as early as possible. In the face of the said order, the learned Additional Sessions Judge could not have stayed the order of issuance of process.

4. From the perusal of the impugned order, it appears that on 6th March 2026, the Criminal Revision Application against the order of issuance of process was posted for hearing and Respondent No.2 therein-Applciant herein, sought time to file an Affidavit in Reply. Thereupon, the learned Additional Sessions Judge adjourned the matter to 2nd April 2026 for arguments and stayed the order of issuance of process.

5. Mr. Pai, the learned Counsel for Respondent No.2 in APL/504/2026 and Ms. Raman, the learned Counsel for Respondent Nos. 2 to 4, in APL/505/2026 on the other hand submit that the trial has yet not commenced. When the order was passed by this Court expediting the trial, in fact, three witnesses were examined by the

Complainant at a pre-process stage under Section 200 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973.

6. The challenge in the Revision before the learned Sessions Judge is to the order of issuance of process. Indisputably, the pleas of the accused have yet not been recorded, and, thus, the trial has yet commenced.

7. In these circumstances, the Applicant is granted time to file Affidavit in Reply by 25th March 2026 before the Court of Additional Sessions Judge. The parties shall appear before the learned Sessions Judge on 2nd April 2026 and, the learned Sessions Judge is requested to decide the Revision Application as expeditiously as possible.

8. On 2nd April 2026, if the learned Additional Sessions Judge is not in a position to decide the Revision Application, the learned Sessions Judge shall pass an appropriate reasoned order.

9. The only clarification that is required, at this stage, is that the impugned order does not and shall not be construed as an attempt to overreach the order passed by this Court on 23rd February 2026.

10. Applications stand disposed.

11. All contentions of all the parties are expressly kept open.

[N. J. JAMADAR, J.]