

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT BOMBAY
CRIMINAL APPELLATE JURISDICTION**

Anticipatory Bail Application No.426 of 2026

Pravin Ganpat Jhadav

Age: 58 years, Occ: Service,

Having address at: Room No.06,

Sai Mauli Chawl, Sant Gyaneshwar Nagar,

Wagle Estate, Thane -400604.

... Applicant

Versus

1. The State of Maharashtra

(At the instance of Naupada Police Station)

2. XYZ

(Flat No.A/5, 401, Madhav Sankalp,

Khadakpada, Kalyan)

... Respondents

Mr Shambhu M Jha, a/w Mr Afsar Ansari and Mr Suraj Pandey,
for the applicant.

Ms Anagha A Deshmukh, APP, for respondent No.1/ State.

None for respondent No.2.

PSI Ravindra Ranbhise, Naupada Police Station, is present.

Coram: R.N. Laddha, J.

Date: 9 April 2026.

P.C.:

By this application, the applicant seeks pre-arrest bail in connection with CR No.748 of 2025, registered at Naupada Police Station, Thane City, for offences punishable under Section 74 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, and Sections

8 and 12 of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012.

2. As per the prosecution, on 18 December 2025 at about 11:30 a.m., during practical examinations in the school laboratory, certain Class XII students approached the complainant, their physics teacher, and alleged that the applicant, employed as a lab attendant, had engaged in inappropriate physical contact with them.

3. The prosecution further alleges that on 19 December 2025, the complainant personally witnessed the applicant striking a student on her back in the laboratory. Based on these allegations, the present FIR has been lodged.

4. The learned Counsel appearing on behalf of the applicant, asserting the applicant's innocence, contends that the applicant has been falsely implicated in the crime. It is emphasised that the victims never raised any complaint to their parents. The applicant, a government servant, has rendered over two decades of unblemished service. At the verge of his retirement, the present complaint has been initiated with ulterior motives. The CCTV footage clearly depicts that the applicant struck one of the girls on her back in the presence of other students and teachers within the laboratory. However, *prima facie*, there is

no material to suggest that the applicant acted with any intention of sexual harassment. The investigation in the present crime has been concluded and the charge sheet has already been filed. Nothing remains to be recovered or discovered from the applicant. The applicant is ready to abide by all the conditions imposed by this Court.

5. On the other hand, the learned Additional Public Prosecutor representing the respondent/ State, fairly acknowledges that the investigation has concluded and nothing is to be recovered or discovered from the applicant. On instructions from the investigating officer present in the Court, the learned APP informs that the prosecution does not require the applicant's custody.

6. A bare perusal of the CCTV footage panchanama reveals that several students, along with the other teachers, were present inside the laboratory during the conduct of the practical examination. The applicant is seen retrieving a wooden scale from beneath the table and handing it over to the students seated at the rear. Thereafter, the applicant is seen briefly patting the victim on the back in the presence of other students seated in close proximity. At best, the conduct attributed to the applicant may be construed as an innocuous or incidental physical gesture, devoid of any overt sexual intent.

Furthermore, the learned APP has fairly conceded that the investigation has been completed, culminating in the filing of the charge sheet, and that custodial interrogation of the applicant is not required.

7. Having considered the totality of the circumstances, this Court is inclined to exercise its discretion in favour of the applicant. Hence, the following order:

ORDER

(i) In the event of the applicant's arrest in CR No.748 of 2025, registered at Naupada Police Station, Thane City, he shall be released on bail upon executing a PR Bond of Rs.25,000/- and furnishing one or more sureties in the like amount.

(ii) The applicant, himself or through any other person, shall not tamper with the evidence or influence witnesses.

(iii) The applicant shall regularly attend the trial proceedings and cooperate with the trial Court for the expeditious disposal of the case.

8. The application stands disposed of accordingly.

[R.N. Laddha, J.]