

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

Cri.Anticipatory Bail Application No.681 of 2026

Nitin Dnyanoba Bedge
Age: 35 yrs, Occ : service,
R/at near Krushna Kamal
Society, Sangurdi, Dehugaon,
Pune.

... Applicant.

Vs.

The State of Maharashtra
(through Baner Police Station,
Dist. Pune)

... Respondent.

Mr Harshwardhan Pawar for the applicant.
Ms MR Tidke, APP for the respondent / State.
PSI Supriya Mandhare, Baner Police Station, Pune.

**Coram : R.N.Laddha, J.
Date : 17 April 2026.**

P.C. :

By this application, the applicant seeks pre-arrest bail in connection with CR No.153 of 2025, registered at Baner Police Station, Pune, for offences punishable under Sections 3, 4 and 5 of the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956, and Sections 143 and 223 read with 3(5) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023.

2. The prosecution's case, in brief, is that on 8 July 2025, acting upon confidential information indicating that women were being lured and exploited for prostitution for monetary gain, a raid was conducted at an establishment known as 'Unic Spa.' During the operation, two women were allegedly discovered engaging in acts of prostitution. It is further alleged that the applicant, who owns the establishment, evaded arrest by escaping through a window with the assistance of a rope at the time of the raid.

3. Mr Harshwardhan Pawar, the learned Counsel appearing on behalf of the applicant and asserting his innocence, contends that the applicant has been falsely implicated in the crime. He submits that the applicant has been made a scapegoat without any substantive material linking him to the alleged offence. The victims are major, and their statements, as recorded before the learned Magistrate, do not attribute any incriminating role to the applicant. Furthermore, the alleged currency has already been seized, and no recovery or discovery is necessitated from the applicant. The investigation is complete, and a charge sheet has been filed. It is also urged that the co-accused has been granted bail, and on the ground of parity,

the applicant is entitled to similar relief. The applicant is willing to abide by any conditions that may be imposed by this Court.

4. Ms Manisha Tidke, the learned Additional Public Prosecutor representing the respondent/ State, opposes the applicant's request for bail, citing the gravity and seriousness of the offence. It is submitted that the applicant was present at the premises during the raid and escaped through a window using a rope, which indicates his involvement. The applicant and the co-accused are owners of the establishment and are involved in the crime. Moreover, the victims were found at the spot while committing illegal activities on the premises owned by the applicant. The learned APP raises an apprehension about granting bail to the applicant as the co-accused is absconding and there exists a possibility that the applicant may tamper with evidence or influence witnesses.

5. This Court has considered the submissions expressed at the Bar and perused the records.

6. Upon a perusal of the record, it emerges that the prosecution has sought to attribute ownership of the spa

premises to the applicant. However, there is no material available on record to show that the applicant is the owner of the spa premises. On the contrary, the leave and license agreement produced by the prosecution demonstrates that the applicant has merely affixed his signature thereto in the capacity of a witness. The licensor of the premises has, in fact, granted the license in favour of the co-accused. The prosecution further contends that the applicant was captured in CCTV footage while absconding from the premises during the raid by descending through a window with the aid of a rope. The learned APP, however, concedes that no CCTV panchnama has been drawn, nor has the alleged rope been seized. Consequently, there exists no substantive material to *prima facie* suggest the applicant's knowledge of the alleged unlawful activities purportedly conducted on the premises, or any compulsion exerted by him upon the victims to engage in illicit acts.

7. It is pertinent to note that both victims are of legal age and have already been released by the learned Magistrate. While their statements recorded by the police contain certain allegations against the applicant, the statements recorded before the learned Magistrate are devoid of such

imputations and do not disclose that the victims were engaged in prostitution. Furthermore, the co-accused have already been enlarged on bail. The mere circumstance that one of the co-accused continues to remain absconding cannot, by itself, constitute a valid ground for denial of anticipatory bail to the applicant. That apart, the investigation has been concluded and the charge sheet has already been filed. Nothing remains to be recovered from or discovered at the instance of the applicant.

8. In view of the foregoing circumstances, this Court finds it a fit case 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.153 of 2025, registered at Baner Police Station, Pune, the applicant 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 shall not tamper with the evidence or influence witnesses.

(iii) The applicant shall not contact the victims in any manner whatsoever.

9. The application stands disposed of accordingly.

[R. N. Laddha, J.]