

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT BOMBAY
NAGPUR BENCH : NAGPUR

CRIMINAL APPLICATION (BAIL) NO. 447/2026

(Pankaj Ramnaresh Pande Vs. State of Maharashtra)

with

CRIMINAL APPLICATION (BAIL) NO. 449/2026

(Sudhakar Uparkar Vs. State of Maharashtra)

with

CRIMINAL APPLICATION (BAIL) NO. 453/2026

(Rajendrakumar Pardhi Vs. State of Maharashtra)

with

CRIMINAL APPLICATION (BAIL) NO. 452/2026

(Roshan Bhaskarrao Raut Vs. State of Maharashtra)

with

CRIMINAL APPLICATION (BAIL) NO. 450/2026

(Nilkamal Thaniram Dongre Vs. State of Maharashtra)

Office Notes, Office Memoranda of Coram,
 appearances, Court's orders of directions
 and Registrar's orders

Court's or Judge's orders

Mr. C.S. Dharmadhikari, Advocate for applicant [BA No.447/2026]
 Mr. A. S. Manohar, Advocate for applicant [BA No.449/2026]
 Mr. A. S. Manohar, Advocate for applicant [BA No.453/2026]
 Mr. V.V. Joshi, Advocate for applicant [BA No. 452/2026]
 Mr. C.S. Dharmadhikari, Advocate for applicant [BA No.450/2026]
 Ms. P.C. Bawankule, APP for non-applicant/State.

CORAM: M. M. NERLIKAR, J.

DATED : 18/04/2026.

Heard

2. For the sake of convenience all the applications are heard together and disposed of vide this common order as the offences are arising out of the same crime.

3. The present applications are filed seeking regular bail in connection with Crime No. 228/2026 registered with Kalmeshwar Police Station, Nagpur Rural for the offences punishable under Sections 105, 125(a), 125(b) and 288 of

the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (“BNS”).

4. The first information report came to be lodged on 01.03.2026 by the informant namely Manoj Kalbande who was working as a police inspector at the relevant time at Kalmeshwar Police Station alleging that on 01.03.2026 between 7:00 a.m to 7:30 a.m. he received an information that an explosion has occurred at SBL Company Rahulgaon Shivar. On reaching the spot the informant along with his team discovered that initially total 17 workers have died and two others were injured in the said explosion. Pursuant to the same, a case of accidental death was registered. Upon enquiry of the cause of the explosion, the Chief Controller of Explosives, Gondhkhairi, Nagpur and the Directorate of Industrial Safety and Health (DISH) cited multiple reasons including safety deficiencies. Based on the aforesaid, a crime came to be registered against officials who are allegedly responsible.

5. The learned counsels for applicants submitted that no role is attributed to any of the applicants in the entire first information report. The blast occurred in the packaging and crimping unit located at Factory Shed

no. 16 B and the present applicants have no concern whatsoever with the said building. The applicants neither have any responsibility nor role with regard to the packaging and crimping unit where the blast had occurred. There are separate officials responsible for different units located in different building and the present applicants have been mechanically arraigned in the present crime. The applicants are in jail since 02.03.2026 for no fault of theirs and considering that the applicants had no concern with the packaging and crimping unit located at Factory Shed no. no. 16 B, a prayer is made to enlarge them on bail.

6. Per Contra, the learned APP vehemently opposed the applications and submits that applicants are involved in a grave offence wherein till today 26 innocent persons have lost their lives. *Prima facie*, the investigation reveals serious lapses in compliance with mandatory safety norms in a highly hazardous industry dealing with explosives. The said explosion resulted in the death of multiple workers and caused grievous burn injuries to several others. Prior to the incident, the Directorate of Industrial Safety and Health (DISH) and the Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organisation (PESO) had inspected the

factory and issued specific directions regarding safety compliance which have not been complied resulting in the unfortunate explosion. It was further submitted that the Applicants are not mere employees but senior managerial officers forming part of the administrative and operational hierarchy of the establishment. The investigation is still in progress and is of a highly technical nature so the custody of applicants will be required for the purposes of concluding the investigation. Considering the gravity of the offence and as the investigation is still in progress, a prayer is made to reject the applications.

7. I have heard the rival contentions and perused the record. Admittedly, the explosion occurred in the packaging and crimping unit located at Factory Shed 16 B. Though a very unfortunate incident has occurred resulting in catastrophic loss of human life however, the fact remains that applicants have no concern whatsoever with the said unit located at Factory Shed 16 B. The present applicants are- Pankaj Ramnaresh Pande is working as Assistant Manager of Crimping and Packaging of building no. 16 C; Sudhakar Uparkar is working as a Supervisor of Electronic Detonator Crimping Unit (Testing & Packaging Process) in

Factory Shed 16 A; Nilkamal Thaniram Dongre is working as a Manager of Filling and Pressing Units and is responsible for building nos. 7, 17 and 17 A; Roshan Bhaskarrao Raut is the Manager of Delay manufacturing unit working in Factory Shed no. 14 and Rajendrakumar Pardhi is working as a Supervisor of Electronic Detonator Crimping unit (Crimping Process) in Building no. 16 A. From the above, it is crystal clear that they had no relation with the activities happening in Factory Shed 16 B as there are different officials responsible for different units located in different buildings. It is further to be noted that these officials are not concerned with curing the shortcomings mentioned in the first information report especially in Factory Shed 16B. In view of this matter, I am inclined to grant bail. Hence the following order:-

ORDER

- i. Criminal Applications are allowed and disposed of.
- ii. The applicants Pankaj Ramnaresh Pande, Sudhakar Uparkar, Nilkamal Thaniram Dongre, Roshan Bhaskarrao Raut and Rajendrakumar Pardhi are released on regular bail in connection with Crime No. 228/2026 registered with Kalmeshwar Police Station, Nagpur Rural for the

offences punishable under Sections 105, 125(a), 125(b) and 288 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (“BNS”) on their furnishing P.R. bond of Rs. 50,000/- each with one surety in the like amount.

- iii. The applicants shall not directly or indirectly make any inducement, threat or promise to any person acquainted with the facts of the case, as also shall not tamper with the evidence.
- iv. The applicants shall provide their residential address and cell number to the concerned Police Station and shall not change their place of residence without prior intimation to the Investigating Agency.
- v. The applicants shall fully cooperate with the investigating agency.
- vi. Once the trial commences, the applicants shall attend each and every date of trial regularly. If they fail to attend the trial for two consecutive dates, or fail to comply with the aforesaid conditions, their default would entail the State to ask for cancellation of bail.
- vii. The observations are *prima facie* in nature and the Trial Court shall not be influenced by the same.

8. All Misc. application(s), pending if any, shall stands disposed of accordingly.

(M. M. NERLIKAR, J.)

Gohane