



IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT BOMBAY
NAGPUR BENCH, NAGPUR.

CRIMINAL APPLICATION [ABA] NO. 161 OF 2026

Shri Abhaykumar Natthusaoji Panwelkar

-- VERSUS --

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. Sahil Bhangde, Advocate for the Applicant.

Ms. T.H. Udeshi, A.P.P. for the Non-applicant/State.

CORAM : M.M. NERLIKAR, J.

DATE : APRIL 28, 2026.

Heard.

2. The applicant is apprehending arrest in connection with Crime No.1644/2025 registered with Police Station, Awadhutwadi, District Yavatmal, for the offences punishable under Sections 471, 466, 465, read with 34 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860 (IPC).

3. The present First Information Report is lodged by a Police Officer of the Anti-Corruption Bureau in pursuance of directions issued by the Hon'ble High Court in pending Public Interest Litigations concerning alleged irregularities in irrigation projects under the Vidarbha Irrigation Development Corporation. During the course of an open inquiry into the tender process relating to the Bembla Main Canal (Km 85 to 86) project, it was

revealed that the contract was awarded to a joint venture, namely S.D. Bhoyar & Company (JV), after due pre-qualification process based on documents submitted by the bidders. It is alleged that, upon verification, two experience certificates submitted by one of the joint venture partners, PK. Construction, Nagpur, were found to be forged. The inquiry further indicates that the said documents were used for qualifying in the tender process and were submitted with certification of authenticity by the joint venture partners. On this basis, it is alleged that the accused persons, being responsible for submission of such documents, have committed offences of forgery and use of forged documents, leading to registration of the present crime under relevant provisions of the Indian Penal Code.

4. The learned counsel for the applicant submits that the applicant is 78 years of age and is bedridden. The allegations are relating to forged documents and no purpose would be served even if the applicant is taken into custody. The applicant is ready to co-operate in the investigation. Therefore, he submits that the applicant may be granted anticipatory bail by allowing the present application.

5. On the other hand, the learned A.P.P. confirms the fact that the applicant is of 78 years of age and is bedridden. She further concedes to the fact that, at present, no custody is required, and

therefore, she submits that appropriate orders be passed.

6. I have considered the rival submissions. This Court, by order dated 06/03/2026, has granted ad-interim relief to the applicant. I have gone through the interim order. It appears from the record that the applicant is of 78 years of age. There are allegations of forgery in respect of experience certificates submitted along with tender document to procure the said tender. It further appears that the investigation is going on. There are total two accused persons. Considering the fact that the applicant is of 78 years of age, and the fact that the respondent – State at present does not require his custody, I am inclined to grant anticipatory bail to the applicant. Hence the following order:-

ORDER

- (i) The ad-interim order dated 06/03/2026 is hereby **confirmed** on the same terms and conditions;
- (ii) The applicant to appear before the concerned Police Station as and when directed by the Investigation Officer and shall co-operate in the investigation;
- (iii) The application is disposed of accordingly.

[M.M. NERLIKAR, J]