

**IN THE HIGH COURT FOR THE STATE OF
TELANGANA
AT HYDERABAD
THE HONOURABLE SMT JUSTICE K. SUJANA
CRIMINAL PETITION No.63 of 2026
02.02.2026**

Between:

Chidambarnathan Shanmuganathan.

PETITIONER

AND

The State of Telangana,
Represented by Public Prosecutor
High Court for the State of Telangana,
at Hyderabad.

RESPONDENT

ORDER

This Criminal Petition is filed for grant of pre-arrest bail to the petitioner who is arrayed as accused No.4 in Crime No.184/2025 before the BDL Bhanoor Police Station, registered for the offences punishable under Sections 105, 110, 118(1) and 118(2) of BNS.

2. Brief facts of the case are that on 30.06.2025 at about 11:40 hours, the complainant Sri Rajanala Sai Yashwanth, lodged a petition before P.S. BDL Bhanoor stating that his father, Sri Rajanala Venkat Jagan Mohan, aged 55 years, who had been working in Sigachi Company at Pashamallaram village for the last 20 years, died in a fire accident that occurred in the said company on 30.06.2025 at about 09:30 hours. It was alleged that despite repeated requests by the employees to replace the old and unsafe machinery, the management continued to operate the same, resulting in an explosion and fire accident in which nine employees died on the spot, including the complainant's father, and several others sustained grievous burn injuries. Subsequently, more employees succumbed to injuries during treatment, and in total 13 deaths and 30–35 serious injuries were reported. On the basis of the said complaint, Crime No.184/2025 was registered .

3. Heard Sri S.Niranjan Reddy, learned senior counsel appearing on behalf of Smt Rubaina Khatoon,

learned counsel for petitioner, and Sri Palle Nageshwar Rao, learned Public Prosecutor appearing on behalf of the respondent - State.

4. Learned Senior Counsel appearing for the Petitioner submitted that the allegations in the FIR, complaint and remand report, even if taken at face value, do not prima facie constitute any offence against the Petitioner/Accused No.4, who has been implicated solely by virtue of his designation as Whole-time Director & Vice Chairman without any specific overt act or personal involvement being attributed to him. He contended that the essential ingredients of culpable homicide under Section 105 BNS, attempt under Section 110 BNS, or voluntarily causing grievous hurt under Section 118 BNS are wholly absent, as the material relied upon by the prosecution discloses at best generalized assertions of negligence and regulatory lapses, which fall short of the high threshold of culpable knowledge mandated by law, as clarified in **Shantibhai**

J. Vaghela v. State of Gujarat¹; **Anbazhagan v. State**²; and **Sushil Ansal v. CBI**³. Further reliance was placed on **Prabhu v. State of Madhya Pradesh**⁴ and **Mathai v. State of Kerala**⁵ to submit that Section 118 BNS is inapplicable in the absence of any voluntary act or use of dangerous means. He asserted that parallel proceedings under the Factories Act and Fire Services Act are already pending, rendering continuation of prosecution under BNS legally impermissible. He emphasized that the Petitioner, a 82-year-old senior citizen with age-related ailments, has consistently cooperated with the investigation, has deep roots in society, no criminal antecedents, and undertakes not to abscond, tamper with evidence or threaten witnesses, thereby entitling him to anticipatory bail in view of the settled principle that bail is the rule and jail is the exception under Article 21 of the Constitution of India. Therefore, he

¹ (2012) 13 SCC 231

² 2023 SCC OnLine SC 857

³ (2014) 6 SCC 173

⁴ (2008) 17 SCC 381

⁵ (2005) 3 SCC 260

prayed for grant of anticipatory bail to the petitioner by allowing this criminal petition.

5. On the other hand, learned Public Prosecutor opposed the submissions made by the learned senior counsel for the petitioner stating that pursuant to the complaint lodged on 30.06.2025 regarding the tragic fire accident in M/s Sigachi Industries Pvt. Ltd., Crime No.184/2025 was registered and subsequently altered to Sections 105, 110, 118(1) and 118(2) of BNS, in view of the gravity of the incident which resulted in the death of 54 workers and grievous injuries to 28 others. He averred that inspection reports of the Deputy Chief Inspector of Factories and the findings of the five-member expert committee categorically established that the management, had full knowledge of the risks associated with MCC dust and hazardous machinery yet deliberately ignored mandatory safety protocols, employed untrained workers, failed to provide firefighting equipment and protective measures, and prioritized production targets over worker safety,

thereby, exhibiting gross negligence and callous disregard for human life. He asserted that 334 witnesses have been examined who consistently deposed against the accused, and since investigation is at a crucial stage, if bail is granted to Petitioner there exists a serious threat of influencing victims and witnesses, and such relief would send a wrong signal to society that wealthy industrialists can compromise worker safety for profits. Therefore, he prayed the Court to dismiss the criminal petition.

6. Having regard to the rival submissions and the material on record, it is noted that the allegations leveled against petitioner are that he along with other accused had not taken proper care even after being informed by employees regarding issues in machines which were required to be changed, whereas, the report would show that fire was initiated in sealing machines, but it is not mentioned that sealing machines became old and there are defects due to which the fire accident occurred. That apart, it is noticed that charge sheet in the case is

already filed. Though learned Public Prosecutor submitted that the Deputy Chief Inspector of Factories inspected and reported lapses on the part of Directors, it is pertinent to note that separate case is filed by the concerned authorities under the Factories Act.

7. Considering the fact that the investigation is already completed and charge sheet is filed, including the fact that there is no allegation of non-cooperation with the investigation, and keeping in mind the age of petitioner, this Court is of the opinion that custodial interrogation of petitioner is not required. That being so, petitioner is granted anticipatory bail, subject to following conditions:

- i. The petitioner shall surrender before the Additional Judicial Magistrate of First Class, Sangareddy District, within two weeks from today, and on such surrender, the petitioner shall be released on bail on executing a personal bond for Rs.1,00,000/- (Rupees One Lakh only), with two sureties for the like sum each.

- ii. The petitioner shall abide by the other conditions stipulated in Section 482(2) of Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023, and shall cooperate with the Investigating Officer in investigating the case.
 - iii. The petitioner shall not tamper with the prosecution evidence or attempt to influence witnesses in any manner.
 - iv. In case of violation of any of the above conditions, the prosecution is at liberty to file petition for cancellation of bail.
8. Accordingly, this Criminal Petition is allowed.

Miscellaneous applications, if any pending, shall stand closed.

K. SUJANA, J

Date: 02.02.2026
PT

THE HONOURABLE SMT JUSTICE K. SUJANA

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