

IN THE HIGH COURT FOR THE STATE OF TELANGANA

AT HYDERABAD

THE HONOURABLE SMT. JUSTICE K. SUJANA

CRIMINAL PETITION No.1345 of 2026

DATE: 05.03.2026

BETWEEN:

Sachin Malik

.....petitioner/accused

And

The State of Telangana,
Rep. by Public Prosecutor,
High Court for the State of Telangana,
at Hyderabad and another

.....Respondent/complainant

ORDER

This Criminal Petition is filed praying this Court to enlarge the petitioner on bail who is arrayed as accused in Crime No.1337 of 2025 before the Chaitanyapuri Police Station, Rachakonda Commissionerate, registered for the offence punishable under Sections 303(2), 306, 308(6), 314, 316(4) read with 3(5) of BNS and Sections 46 and 66 of IT Act-2000-2008 and Section 72A of ITA Act-2008.

2. The brief facts of the case are that the de facto complainant complainant, Sri S. Vignesh, an employee of Giga AI Private Limited, lodged a complaint stating that one Sachin Malik was employed as a Sales Development Representative from 01.11.2024 until his termination on 19.08.2025. During his employment, he had executed confidentiality and proprietary information agreements and was entrusted with company-issued devices and access to sensitive internal data. After his termination, despite receiving full and final settlement, he failed to return the company laptop and mobile phone. Subsequently, the company received anonymous emails from a proton.me address threatening to release approximately 70 GB of confidential company data unless demands, including payment of USD 3 million in cryptocurrency or transfer of equity, were met. An internal IT review revealed that prior to his exit, he had forwarded several confidential emails and attachments to his personal email account. Though he denied sending the anonymous emails, he allegedly demanded 0.5% equity in the company to stop the threats. Apprehending misappropriation and potential misuse of confidential data causing serious economic and reputational loss, the complainant requested action. Basing on the same, the Crime was registered for the above said offences.

3. Heard Sri K. Prithvi Reddy, learned counsel appearing on behalf of the petitioner as well as Sri M.Rama Chandra Reddy, learned Additional Public Prosecutor appearing on behalf of the respondent – State and Sri T.Niranjan Reddy, learned Senior Counsel representing Sri K. Siddharth Rao, learned counsel appearing on behalf of respondent No.2/de facto complainant.

4. Learned counsel for the petitioner submitted that the petitioner was innocent and had no direct or indirect involvement in the alleged offence and that the petitioner had no knowledge of the victim or the alleged dispute and that the case diary did not attribute any overt act or *mens rea* to him. He further submitted that the petitioner was falsely implicated solely on the basis of the alleged confession of co-accused and mere assumptions and presumptions, without any credible material linking him to the crime or to the other accused. He further submitted that the provisions of Sections were wrongly invoked in the absence of *prima facie* ingredients and that the FIR was registered without proper application of mind and that the investigation had already been completed, the petitioner had been in judicial custody since 08.01.2026, and there is no possibility of tampering with evidence. Therefore, he prayed the Court to grant bail to the petitioner by allowing this Criminal Petition.

5. On the other hand, learned counsel for respondent No.2 submitted that a strong *prima facie* case was made out against the petitioner and that the bail petition was devoid of merit and that although the company iPhone was recovered, the crucial company-issued laptop remained unrecovered despite repeated searches and statutory notices, and its last traced location was at the petitioner's residence, indicating deliberate concealment and non-cooperation. He further submitted that the laptop contained highly sensitive and proprietary company data and constituted core digital evidence necessary to establish the origin of the extortion emails sent through Proton Mail. He contended that the demand of 0.5% equity valued at approximately

USD 3 million matched the amount sought in the extortion emails, thereby establishing a clear nexus, supported by incriminating electronic communications and admissions of storage of confidential data on personal and cloud platforms. He further contended that the offence was grave, premeditated, and technologically sophisticated, involving encrypted communication and risk of destruction or tampering of volatile digital evidence. Therefore, he prayed the Court to dismiss the Criminal Petition.

6. In the light of the submissions made by both the learned counsel and a perusal of the material available on record, it appears that on 28.12.2025 petitioner was arrested and taken into custody. The only contention raised by the learned counsel for the respondent is that the petitioner was allegedly in possession of a laptop given by the de facto complainant containing about 70 GB of data, and that the same was not recovered from the petitioner. It is contended that if the petitioner is released on bail, there is a possibility of misuse of the said data. On the other hand, the learned counsel for the petitioner submitted that the laptop and the mobile phone have already been seized by the police, and therefore the petitioner is no longer in possession of the alleged data. Hence, there is no possibility of the petitioner misusing the same. Record shows that investigation authority took the petitioner for the custody on two occasions and search warrant was issued conducted the search of the petitioner residents at Delhi. Thereafter, considering the period of custody and the allegations made against the petitioner, this Court deems it fit to enlarge the petitioner on bail subject to the following conditions:

- i. The petitioner shall execute a personal bond for a sum of Rs.1,00,000/- (Rupees One Lakh Rupees only) each, with two sureties for a like sum each to the satisfaction of the learned IV Additional Metropolitan Magistrate, Ranga Reddy District at L.B. Nagar.
- ii. The petitioner shall appear before the concerned SHO at 11:00 a.m., on every Monday for a period of eight (8) week or till filing of charge sheet whichever is earlier, for the purpose of investigation, and thereafter, as and when required.
- iii. The petitioner shall abide by the conditions stipulated in Section 437(3) of Cr.P.C.(presently, Section 480(3) of the BNSS).

7. Accordingly, the Criminal petition is allowed. However, if the data allegedly belonging to the de facto complainant, i.e., 70 GB of data in the laptop given by the de facto complainant, is found to have been misused by the petitioner in any manner, the de facto complainant or the prosecution shall be at liberty to file an application for cancellation of bail

Miscellaneous applications, if any pending, shall stand closed.

K. SUJANA, J

Date: 05.03.2026
SPD

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