

**IN THE HIGH COURT FOR THE STATE OF TELANGANA  
AT HYDERABAD**

**THE HONOURABLE SRI JUSTICE N.TUKARAMJI**

**CRIMINAL PETITION Nos.8401 OF 2026**

**DATE: 24.06.2026**

Between :

Miss JatavathKeerthi and five others.

... Petitioners

AND

The State of Telangana  
Rep by Public Prosecutor at High Court of Telangana  
Hyderabad Through S H O P S Madhira Town Khammam  
District

... Respondent.

**ORDER:**

This petition is filed under Section 482 of *Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita*, 2023 (for short, "BNSS"), seeking the relief of anticipatory bail.

2. The petitioners are arrayed as Accused Nos.1 to 6 in FIR No.40 of 2026 on the file of Madhira Town police station registered for the offences punishable under Sections 296(b), 115(2), 108 read with Section 35 of BNS under Sections 4(i), 4(ii) and 4(v) of Telangana Prohibition of Ragging Act, 1997.

3. Heard Mr. Ponnamm Ashok Goud, learned counsel for the petitioner, and Mr. M. Vivekananda Reddy, learned Assistant Public Prosecutor appearing for respondent/State.

4. The prosecution case, in brief, is that the deceased, who was pursuing her M.Sc. course at Kakatiya University and residing in the University hostel, was allegedly subjected to ragging, humiliation, verbal abuse, threats and physical assault by the petitioners, who are stated to be her senior students. It is alleged that, being unable to withstand such persistent harassment and humiliation, the deceased consumed poison and, despite undergoing medical treatment, ultimately succumbed thereto. Following her death, a report was lodged by her mother, resulting in registration of Crime No.40 of 2026 of Madhira Town Police Station. Apprehending arrest in connection with the said crime, the petitioners have approached seeking anticipatory bail.

5.1. Learned counsel appearing for the petitioners contends that the petitioners are innocent students and have been falsely implicated in the present crime. It is submitted that no specific overt acts have been attributed to any individual petitioner and that the allegations levelled against them are general, omnibus and bereft of material particulars. According to the learned counsel, the complaint does not disclose the precise role allegedly played by each accused nor does it contain

particulars regarding the date, time and manner of the alleged incidents.

5.2. It is further contended that neither the deceased nor any of her family members lodged any complaint before the University authorities, the Anti-Ragging Committee constituted under the applicable University Regulations, or the hostel administration at any point of time prior to the death of the deceased. It is argued that there exists an unexplained delay in lodging the complaint and that there are no allegations disclosing any direct, proximate or positive act attributable to the petitioners amounting to instigation, intentional aid or active participation so as to prima facie satisfy the ingredients of abetment of suicide.

5.3. It is argued that all the petitioners are young students pursuing higher education, possess no criminal antecedents and have deep roots in society. Their custodial interrogation, according to the learned counsel, is wholly unnecessary for the purpose of effective investigation. Learned counsel further emphasizes that arrest of the petitioners at this stage is likely to cause serious prejudice to their educational pursuits and may adversely affect their academic standing and future career prospects. It is therefore prayed for grant of anticipatory bail.

6.1. Per contra, learned Assistant Public Prosecutor opposed the petition contending that the complaint prima facie discloses grave allegations against the petitioners. It is submitted that the defacto complainant's daughter was pursuing her M.Sc. course and residing in the University hostel, where she was allegedly subjected to ragging by her seniors/ the petitioners herein.

6.2. It is stated that the deceased had requested her mother to take her back home and accordingly returned to her native place. On the following day, she underwent treatment at a Government Hospital for certain ailments, including complaints relating to her left ear, and as her condition deteriorated, she was shifted to NIMS Hospital. During the course of treatment, she allegedly disclosed that the petitioners had subjected her to ragging, humiliation, threats and physical assault in a video recording. Unable to withstand such humiliation, she is stated to have consumed rat poison. Ultimately, she succumbed to her illness on 16.03.2026.

6.3. It is therefore submitted that there are specific allegations against the petitioners; the investigation is at a nascent stage; and grant of anticipatory bail at this juncture may hamper effective investigation. Accordingly, dismissal of the petition is sought.

7. I have carefully perused the material on record and considered the rival submissions.

8. The menace of ragging in educational institutions has repeatedly been deprecated by constitutional courts and has been recognised as a serious social evil affecting the dignity, mental well-being and safety of students. At the same time, while considering an application for anticipatory bail, the Court is required to maintain a delicate balance between the fundamental right to personal liberty guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution of India and the societal interest in ensuring a fair, effective and unhindered investigation.

9. At this stage, it is not in dispute that the petitioners are young students pursuing higher studies and do not possess any criminal antecedents. It is also a matter of record that the complaint came to be lodged only after the death of the deceased, though the alleged incidents are stated to have occurred approximately ten days prior thereto. Prima facie, no complaint appears to have been lodged by the deceased or her family members before the University authorities, Anti-Ragging Committee or hostel administration immediately after the alleged incidents. Whether such omission has any bearing upon the truthfulness or otherwise of the allegations is a matter which falls within the domain of investigation and trial.

10. It is further evident that the prosecution case substantially rests upon the statements allegedly made by the deceased while undergoing treatment at NIMS Hospital and upon a video recording purportedly containing her narration of the incidents. The evidentiary value, voluntariness, authenticity and admissibility of such electronic material, as well as the circumstances under which it came into existence, are matters which require thorough investigation and eventual adjudication in accordance with law. Likewise, the precise role attributed to each petitioner and whether there existed any direct or proximate act of instigation, intentional aid or active participation sufficient to attract the ingredients of abetment of suicide can only be determined upon collection and appreciation of evidence during investigation.

11. In the Instant case, the prosecution case substantially rests upon documentary, electronic and medical evidence, including the alleged video recording, hospital records, post-mortem report, forensic material and statements of witnesses. Such evidence is capable of being collected, secured and preserved by the investigating agency without necessarily subjecting the petitioners to custodial interrogation. Significantly, the prosecution has not placed before this Court any material indicating that the petitioners have attempted to evade investigation, destroy evidence or otherwise obstruct the investigative process. On the contrary, the petitioners have expressed their

readiness to cooperate with the investigating agency and to comply with such conditions as may be imposed.

12. The principles governing grant of anticipatory bail have been authoritatively laid down by the Supreme Court in *Gurbaksh Singh Sibbia v. State of Punjab*, (1980) 2 SCC 565, wherein it was held that the power under Section 438 Cr.P.C. is an extraordinary remedy intended to safeguard individual liberty and cannot be circumscribed by rigid limitations. In *Siddharam Satlingappa Mhetre v. State of Maharashtra*, (2011) 1 SCC 694, the Supreme Court reiterated that arrest should not be resorted to merely because it is lawful to do so and that custodial interrogation should be directed only where it is demonstrably necessary for effective investigation.

13. Further, it is well settled that the object of anticipatory bail is neither to shield an accused from lawful investigation nor to frustrate the legitimate interests of the prosecution, but to ensure that an individual is not unnecessarily exposed to humiliation, arrest or incarceration pending investigation. Grant of anticipatory bail does not amount to an acquittal, nor does it curtail the authority of the investigating agency to conduct a fair and effective investigation in accordance with law.

14. Having regard to the totality of the circumstances, particularly the young age and educational status of the petitioners, their clean antecedents, the fact that the investigation principally depends upon documentary and electronic evidence already in existence, and the absence of any material demonstrating the necessity for custodial interrogation, this Court is of the considered opinion that the petitioners prayer for grant of anticipatory bail deserves positive consideration.

15. Accordingly, the Criminal Petition is allowed. Petitioner Nos.1 to 6/Accused Nos.1 to 6 shall be enlarged on anticipatory bail, subject to the following conditions:

(A) Petitioner Nos. 1 to 6 shall surrender before the Station House Officer, Madhira, on or before 06.07.2026. Upon such surrender, or in the event of their arrest, the Station House Officer shall release them on bail upon each of them executing a personal bond for a sum of Rs.25,000/- (Rupees twenty five thousand only), with two sureties for a like sum each, to the satisfaction of the said officer.

(B) The petitioners shall remain available before the Investigating Officer, as and when required during the course of the investigation and shall extend full cooperation to the Investigating Officer.

(C) The petitioners shall furnish their complete residential addresses and contact details to the Investigating Officer and shall keep the same updated throughout the pendency of the proceedings before the trial Court.

(D) The petitioners shall not leave India without obtaining prior permission from the Investigating Officer concerned.

(E) The petitioners shall neither directly nor indirectly induce, threaten, influence, or contact any prosecution witness, nor shall they tamper with the prosecution evidence in any manner whatsoever.

(F) In the event of a breach of any of the aforesaid conditions by the petitioners, the prosecution shall be at liberty to take appropriate steps seeking cancellation of bail.

16. It is made clear that the observations made herein are confined solely to the adjudication of the present application for anticipatory bail and shall not be construed as an expression of opinion on the merits of the case.

Pending miscellaneous applications, if any, shall stand closed.

Date: 24.06.2026

N.TUKARAMJI, J

MRKR

**THE HON'BLE SRI JUSTICE N. TUKARAMJI**

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