IN THE HIGH COURT FOR THE STATE OF TELANGANA

AT HYDERABAD

THE HONOURABLE SRI JUSTICE N.TUKARAMJI

CRIMINAL PETITION Nos. 17720 AND 17721 OF 2026

DATE: 13.11.2026

Crl. P. No. 17720 of 2026:

(CNR No. HBHC010741832026)

Between :

Rajitha Rajulapudi and three others

… Petitioners/Accused Nos. 1,2,3 & 5

AND

The State of Telangana, Through P.S. Bhadrachalam Town, Bhadradri Kothagudem District, Represented by Public Prosecutor, High Court for the State of Telangana, Hyderabad, and another.

… Respondents.

Crl. P. No. 17721 of 2026:

(CNR No. HBHC010741852026)

Between :

Talari Ravi Kumar

… Petitioner/Accused No. 6

AND

The State of Telangana, Through P.S. Bhadrachalam Town, Bhadradri Kothagudem District, Represented by Public Prosecutor, High Court for the State of Telangana, Hyderabad, and another.

… Respondents.

COMMON ORDER

These Criminal Petitions are filed under Section 482 of the *Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023* (for short, "BNSS"), seeking the relief of anticipatory bail.

2. As the petitioners in both the Criminal Petitions are accused in the same crime and seeking analogous relief, these petitions are heard together and are being adjudicated by this common order.

3. Heard Mr. B. Bhagath Sain, learned counsel for the petitioners; Mr. Syed Yasar Mamoon, learned Additional Public Prosecutor appearing for respondent No.1-State and Mr. S.Madan Mohan Rao, learned counsel for respondent No.2/de facto complainant.

4. The petitioners in Crl.P.No. 17720 of 2026 are arrayed as Accused Nos. 1, 2, 3 and 5 and the petitioner in Crl.P. No. 17721 of 2026 is arrayed as Accused No. 6 in Crime No. 279 of 2026 of Bhadrachalam Town Police Station, Bhadradri Kothagudem District, for the offence punishable under Section 108 read with Section 190 of the *Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023* (for short, "BNS").

5. The prosecution case, in brief, is that the deceased was working as a Manager at the Telangana State Civil Supplies Corporation LPG Centre, Palwancha, where Accused No.1 had earlier worked as a contract Computer

Operator. It is alleged that disputes arose between the deceased and Accused No.1 in connection with the collection of additional amounts from LPG consumers. On 28.08.2026, Accused Nos.1 to 6 allegedly visited the office of the deceased, abused him in filthy language and threatened him. Subsequently, Accused No.1 lodged a complaint alleging sexual harassment against the deceased before the District Collector. It is further alleged that the accused demanded an amount of Rs.1 crore from the deceased for withdrawing the said complaint. Unable to withstand the alleged harassment and pressure exerted by the accused, the deceased is stated to have committed suicide on 17.10.2026 at Godavari Lodge, Bhadrachalam, leaving behind a suicide note holding the accused responsible for his death. Based on the complaint lodged by the daughter of the deceased, the police registered the present crime.

6.1. Learned counsel for the petitioners would submit that the petitioners are innocent and have been falsely implicated in the present crime. It is contended that the allegations, even if taken at face value, do not prima facie constitute an offence punishable under Section 108 of the BNS. Neither the FIR nor the suicide note, according to the learned counsel, discloses any specific act of intentional instigation or intentional aid, or the requisite *mens rea* on the part of the petitioners to drive the deceased to commit suicide. The allegations are stated to be general and omnibus in nature, without attributing any specific overt act or individual role to each of

the petitioners. Mere reference to the names of the petitioners in the suicide note, by itself, would not constitute abetment of suicide in the absence of material indicating intentional instigation or aid.

6.2. It is further contended that the alleged incident occurred on 28.08.2026, whereas the deceased committed suicide on 17.10.2026, after a lapse of nearly 50 days. No subsequent or proximate act of instigation has been attributed to the petitioners so as to establish a direct nexus between the alleged incident and the commission of suicide.

6.3. Learned counsel would further submit that Petitioner/Accused No.6 neither worked at the LPG Centre nor was a party to the disputes between the deceased and Accused No.1. No independent motive or specific overt act has been attributed to him. The alleged demand for Rs.1 crore is also specifically denied, and the FIR does not disclose the individual participation of the petitioners or specify the date and mode of the alleged demand.

6.4. It is also contended that the sexual harassment complaint dated 30.09.2026 and the subsequent inquiry conducted by the Internal Complaints Committee on 16.10.2026 constitute relevant intervening circumstances preceding the unfortunate incident, and that Petitioner/Accused No.6 had no role whatsoever in the said proceedings. He would further submit that there is no prima facie material to establish the

existence of an unlawful assembly or a common object to commit the alleged offence, as required for invoking Section 190 of the BNS.

6.5. In support of the above contentions, learned counsel places reliance upon the judgments of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in *Jayedeepsinh Pravinsinh Chavda v. State of Gujarat*, (2025) 2 SCC 116; *Donga Ramu v. State of Telangana*, Crl.P. No.9258 of 2026, decided on 29.06.2026; and *Pandula Mounika v. State of Telangana*, Crl.P. No.11498 of 2026, decided on 28.07.2026, to contend that the essential ingredients of abetment, namely, intentional instigation, mens rea or intentional aid, must be established.

6.6. It is further submitted that custodial interrogation of the petitioners is not necessary, as the investigation substantially concerns documentary evidence, including the suicide note, official correspondence and statements of witnesses, which can be collected by the Investigating Agency without taking the petitioners into custody. The petitioners undertake to cooperate with the investigation, appear before the Investigating Officer as and when required, and neither tamper with the prosecution evidence nor influence the witnesses. On these grounds, learned counsel prays for grant of anticipatory bail to the petitioners.

7.1. Per contra, learned Additional Public Prosecutor and learned counsel appearing for Respondent No.2/de facto complainant would submit that the allegations against the petitioners are serious in nature and that their respective roles and involvement in the events preceding the death of the deceased are borne out by the FIR, the statement of the complainant and the translated version of the suicide note left behind by the deceased.

7.2. It is submitted that Accused No.1 had earlier worked as a contract Computer Operator at the LPG Centre, Palwancha, and allegedly insisted that the deceased permit the collection of additional amounts from LPG consumers. As the deceased refused to accede to the said demand, disputes arose between them, which allegedly resulted in the subsequent harassment of the deceased. It is further alleged that Accused No.1 lodged a complaint of sexual harassment against the deceased before the District Collector and, along with the other accused, visited his office, abused and threatened him, and demanded Rs.1 crore for withdrawal of the complaint. It is also pointed out that Accused No.1 had earlier submitted a workplace harassment complaint and representations seeking transfer before the departmental authorities.

7.3. With regard to Accused No.2, who is the husband of Accused No.1, it is alleged that he participated along with the other accused in the incident during which the deceased was abused and threatened. The suicide note

further indicates that the deceased had informed Accused No.2 about the alleged relationship between Accused Nos.1 and 5, but Accused No.2 did not respond.

7.4. As regards Accused No.3, who is stated to be a TV reporter, it is alleged that he participated in the said incident. The suicide note also refers to the circulation of allegations against the deceased through the media and social media, which allegedly contributed to his mental harassment.

7.5. Similarly, Accused No.5, who is stated to be connected with the Kothagudem Gas Office and the media, is alleged to have participated in the incident, threatened the deceased and joined the other accused in demanding Rs.1 crore. The suicide note also refers to the alleged relationship between Accused Nos.1 and 5, which the deceased claims to have brought to the notice of Accused No.2.

7.6. Insofar as Accused No.6 is concerned, who is also referred to as TV9 Ravi, it is alleged that he participated along with the other accused in the incident. His name also finds mention in the suicide note among the persons allegedly responsible for subjecting the deceased to mental harassment.

7.7. Learned Additional Public Prosecutor would further submit that the allegations have to be considered cumulatively, having regard to the alleged acts of harassment, threats, monetary demand and the circumstances

preceding the suicide. It is contended that the suicide note, read together with the other material collected during the course of investigation, requires proper examination and that the respective roles attributed to the petitioners cannot be brushed aside at this stage. It is further submitted that custodial interrogation of the petitioners is necessary to elicit relevant facts and ascertain their individual involvement in the alleged offence. Accordingly, learned counsel prays for dismissal of the criminal petitions.

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

9. At the outset, it is to be observed that mere reference to the names of the petitioners in a suicide note does not, by itself, establish their criminal liability for abetment of suicide. The offence punishable under Section 108 of the BNS requires the prosecution to establish abetment as defined under Section 45 thereof, which encompasses instigation, engagement in a conspiracy followed by an act or illegal omission in pursuance thereof, or intentional aid in the commission of the act.

10. In *Jaydeepsinh Pravinsinh Chavda* (supra), the Hon'ble Supreme Court emphasised that mere harassment, by itself, is insufficient to constitute the offence of abetment of suicide. The prosecution must establish the requisite *mens rea*, coupled with a positive or direct act of instigation or intentional aid having a proximate nexus with the commission of suicide.

Similarly, in *Mahendra Awase v. State of Madhya Pradesh*, 2025 INSC 76, decided on 17.01.2025, the Hon'ble Supreme Court reiterated the necessity of establishing a positive and proximate act having a direct nexus with the commission of suicide.

11. In the present case, the alleged incident of abuse and threats at the office of the deceased is stated to have occurred on 28.08.2026, whereas the deceased committed suicide on 17.10.2026, after an interval of nearly 50 days. The material presently placed before this Court does not disclose any specific act of instigation by the petitioners during the intervening period. Though Accused No.1 lodged a sexual harassment complaint against the deceased on 26.09.2026 and an inquiry was conducted by the Internal Complaints Committee on 16.10.2026, the mere lodging of a complaint or participation in departmental proceedings cannot, by itself, constitute abetment of suicide in the absence of material demonstrating intentional instigation or aid. The allegation that the petitioners collectively demanded Rs.1 crore for withdrawal of the complaint is undoubtedly serious. However, the material presently available does not specify the date or mode of the alleged demand or the individual participation of each petitioner therein. These aspects would require further investigation.

12. Insofar as the individual roles of the petitioners are concerned, Accused No.1 is alleged to have been instrumental in the employment-related dispute, lodged the sexual harassment complaint and participated in

the alleged monetary demand. Nevertheless, the material presently placed before this Court does not sufficiently demonstrate that her conduct was intended to instigate or intentionally aid the deceased in committing suicide.

13. As regards Accused No.2, apart from his alleged participation in the incident at the office of the deceased, no specific act of instigation or intentional aid is attributed to him. His alleged failure to respond when the deceased informed him about the relationship between Accused Nos.1 and 5 cannot, by itself, constitute abetment of suicide. Similarly, though Accused No.3 is stated to be a media reporter, no specific publication, threat or independent act of instigation is attributed to him in the material presently available. Insofar as Accused No.5 is concerned, his alleged relationship with Accused No.1, participation in the incident at the office of the deceased and involvement in the alleged collective monetary demand are matters requiring investigation. However, no specific subsequent act demonstrating intentional instigation or aid is presently disclosed. Likewise, though the name of Accused No.6 finds mention in the suicide note and he is alleged to have participated in the incident at the office of the deceased, no specific individual threat, participation in the alleged monetary demand or involvement in the sexual harassment complaint or the proceedings before the Internal Complaints Committee is attributed to him.

14. Thus, the allegations against the petitioners are substantially collective in nature and, on the material presently available, do not disclose specific individual overt acts prima facie satisfying the essential ingredients of abetment of suicide. Though the prosecution alleges that the accused visited the office of the deceased collectively, the material presently placed before this Court does not sufficiently disclose that the alleged offence was committed in prosecution of such common object. The nature of the alleged common object, as well as the individual roles and participation of the accused in furtherance thereof, would require further investigation.

15. Another relevant consideration is the necessity for custodial interrogation of the petitioners. The material relevant to the investigation primarily comprises the suicide note, the complaint lodged before the District Collector, the records of the Internal Complaints Committee, official correspondence and statements of witnesses, which are predominantly documentary and testimonial in nature. The prosecution has not demonstrated any specific requirement necessitating the custodial interrogation of the petitioners.

16. Having regard to the nature of the allegations, the individual roles attributed to the petitioners, the absence of any specific and proximate acts of instigation disclosed in the material presently available, the nature of the evidence required to be collected during the investigation and the absence

of any demonstrated necessity for custodial interrogation, this Court is of the considered view that the petitioners have made out a case for grant of anticipatory bail, subject to appropriate conditions to ensure their availability for investigation and to safeguard the interests of the prosecution.

17. Accordingly, the Criminal Petitions are allowed. The petitioners/Accused Nos. 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6 shall be enlarged on anticipatory bail, subject to the following conditions:

(A) The petitioners/Accused Nos. 1,2,3,5 and 6 shall surrender before the Station House Officer, Bhadrachalam Town Police Station, on or before 28.11.2026. Upon such surrender or in the event of arrest, the Station House Officer shall release the petitioners on bail on execution of personal bonds for a sum of Rs.25,000/- (Rupees Twenty Five Thousand only) each, with two sureties for a like sum each, to the satisfaction of the said Officer.

(B) The petitioners shall appear before the Investigating Officer on every Tuesday and Saturday between 10:00 AM to 03:00 PM, for a period of ten (12) weeks from the date of his release on bail or until filing of the final result, whichever is earlier.

(C) The petitioners shall remain available for interrogation as and when required by the Investigating Officer during the course of investigation and shall extend full cooperation with the Investigating Officer.

(D) The petitioners shall not interfere with the prosecution evidence and shall not contact or intimidate the de facto complainant.

(E) The petitioners shall strictly comply with all the conditions contemplated under Section 482(2) of the BNSS.

(F) The petitioners shall furnish their complete residential addresses, mobile numbers and other contact particulars to the Investigating Officer and shall promptly intimate any changes therein.

(G) The petitioners shall not directly or indirectly induce, threaten, influence, or promise any person acquainted with the facts of the case, nor shall they tamper with prosecution evidence in any manner whatsoever.

(H) Any wilful breach or violation of any of the aforesaid conditions shall render the petitioners liable to appropriate proceedings before the Court below, including cancellation of bail, in accordance with the provisions of the BNSS and other applicable law.

18. It is made clear that the observations contained herein are confined solely to the consideration of the present applications for anticipatory bail and shall not be construed as an expression on the merits of the case. The said observations shall not prejudice the investigation or the trial in any manner. Pending miscellaneous applications, if any, shall stand closed.

N.TUKARAMJI, J

Date: 13.11.2026
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