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* **IN THE HIGH COURT OF DELHI AT NEW DELHI**

\+ BAIL APPLN. 323/2026

PRADEEP KUMAR SAHU .....Petitioner

Through: Mr. Arun Saxena and Mr. Govind Shrivastava, Advocates

versus

STATE OF NCT OF DELHI .....Respondent

Through: Mr. Manoj Pant, APP for the State with SI Sunil Dev Sihag

(46)

\+ BAIL APPLN. 332/2026

SHALINI SHIVHARE .....Petitioner

Through: Mr. Arun Saxena and Mr. Govind Shrivastava, Advocates

versus

STATE OF NCT OF DELHI .....Respondent

Through: Mr. Manoj Pant, APP for the State

(47)

\+ BAIL APPLN. 344/2026

KOMAL PAKHRIYA .....Petitioner

Through: Mr. Arun Saxena and Mr. Govind Shrivastava, Advocates

versus

STATE OF NCT OF DELHI .....Respondent

Through: Mr. Manoj Pant, APP for the State

CORAM:
HON'BLE DR. JUSTICE SWARANA KANTA SHARMA

O R D E R

% **30.01.2026**

CRL.M.A. Nos. 2588/2026, 2660/2026 & 2727/2026 (exemption)

1. Allowed, subject to all just exceptions.

2. Applications stand disposed of.

BAIL APPLN. Nos.323/2026, 332/2026 & 344/2026

3. By way of the instant applications, the applicants seek grant of anticipatory bail in case arising out of FIR bearing No. 99/2025, registered at Police Station Cyber, Shahdara, Delhi for the commission of offence punishable under Sections 318(4)/3(5) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 (hereafter '*BNS*') .

4. Issue notice. The learned APP accepts notice on behalf of the State.

5. Brief facts of the present case are that an FIR was registered on 25.10.2025 on the complaint of the complainant, who stated that on 11.07.2025 he came across a Facebook advertisement relating to a marriage conference. Upon clicking the advertisement, he received calls on his WhatsApp number from mobile numbers 72******08 and 95******59 and was informed that registration was mandatory for receiving matrimonial prospects. Acting on these representations, the complainant transferred various amounts through UPI to the QR codes provided, including ₹3,000 towards registration, ₹10,000 for sharing photographs and contact details of a prospective bride, and ₹20,000 towards a ring ceremony. He was thereafter induced to make further payments on different pretexts, including marriage certificate charges, meeting arrangements, travel expenses, ID creation, and privacy restrictions, amounting to a total of ₹81,000. When an additional demand of ₹20,000 was made, which he refused to pay, the complainant

realised that he had been cheated. Therefore, the present FIR was registered by the complainant.

6. The learned counsel for all the applicants argues that the applicants/accused persons have been falsely implicated in the present case and that there is not even an iota of evidence on record to substantiate the allegations against them. It is further argued that the applicants have clean antecedents and no prior criminal involvement. It is further submitted that the applicants are ready and willing to join the investigation and are also open to resolving the matter amicably. It is argued that the applicants have been running a matrimonial platform for a considerable period, wherein mobile numbers of prospective parties are exchanged only with their consent, and any further communication thereafter remains private between the concerned parties, in which the applicants have no role. It is further argued that the complainant's profile was rejected on multiple occasions, and other parties did not show interest in proceeding further, owing to which the complainant has filed the present FIR out of grievance. Learned counsel also submits that applicant/accused Komal Pakhriya was working with applicant/accused Shalini Shivhare, who operates a commercial establishment under the name *"Online Service Point"* and has been engaged in the matrimonial business since 2022. In view of the aforesaid submissions, it is prayed that the applicants/accused persons be granted the relief of anticipatory bail.

7. The learned APP for the State argues that the offence in question is grave in nature, as it involves a systematic and organised cyber fraud. It is further argued that during interrogation, Rajkumari Prajapati disclosed that the applicant/accused Pradeep Sahu had provided her with mobile numbers

which were used to contact customers for matrimonial purposes, from whom money was extracted, and thereafter communication was deliberately discontinued. It is further argued that the amounts so collected were transferred into a bank account held in the name of applicant/accused Shalini Shivhare, to whom details of the earnings were regularly shared. The learned APP further submits that daily attendance records of the call centre were forwarded to applicant/accused Komal Pakhriya and that the bank account into which the defrauded amounts were credited was operated through an internet service registered in the name of applicant/accused Komal Pakhriya. It is further argued that mobile phones seized from Rajkumari Prajapati revealed that she was in constant communication with the applicants/accused Pradeep Sahu, Shalini Shivhare, and Komal Pakhriya. Upon analysis of the said devices, several WhatsApp groups relating to fraudulent call centre operations were discovered, wherein applicant/accused Pradeep Sahu was found to be the administrator and applicant/accused Shalini Shivhare was a member of each such group. The learned APP submits that custodial interrogation of the applicants/accused is necessary to ascertain the functioning of the fraudulent call centres, the roles played by the accused persons, and the larger conspiracy involved. In view of the seriousness of the offence and the material collected during investigation, it is prayed that the application for anticipatory bail be rejected.

8. This court has **heard** the arguments addressed by learned counsel for applicants and the learned APP for the state and has perused the material on record.

9. It is pertinent to note that one Ms. Vaishnavi was issued a notice under Section 35 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023

(hereinafter *'BNSS'*), pursuant to which she joined the investigation. During her interrogation, she stated that she was working with *Rishtey Guide Services*, the proprietor of which was one Rajkumari Prajapati.

10. Thereafter, Rajkumari Prajapati was also issued a notice under Section 35 BNSS, and she joined the investigation on 04.11.2025. During her examination, she stated that her husband had passed away in January 2025, and thereafter, while searching for employment, she came into contact with the applicant/accused Pradeep Sahu through a job-related poster. She further stated that the applicant/accused Pradeep Sahu advised her to open a centre in her own name and provided her with mobile phones and SIM cards for contacting customers seeking matrimonial matches, assuring her a remuneration of ₹8,000 per month. Pursuant thereto, she opened a centre under the name *Rishtey Guide Services* and persuaded customers to transfer money into bank account number 92**********50, which had been provided to her by the applicant/accused Pradeep Sahu. She further stated that after getting the money, they used to stop responding to the customers.

11. During the course of investigation, it was revealed that the said Axis Bank account bearing number 92**********50, which was provided by the applicant/accused Pradeep Sahu, was maintained in the name of *Online Service Point*, wherein the proprietor was shown as applicant/accused Shalini Shivhare.

12. Further, during her interrogation, Rajkumari Prajapati disclosed that she used to regularly share details of the earnings with the applicant/accused Shalini Shivhare through WhatsApp. It was further revealed that Rajkumari Prajapati used to send the daily attendance records of the call centre to the applicant/accused Komal Pakhriya through WhatsApp. The investigation

also established that the Axis Bank account in question was operated through the internet using a DSL ID registered in the name of the applicant/accused Komal Pakhriya.

13. It is pertinent to note that four mobile phones were seized from Rajkumari Prajapati, which, upon analysis, revealed WhatsApp chats showing that she was in constant contact with applicant/accused Pradeep Sahu, Shalini Shivhare, and Komal. The analysis further revealed the existence of multiple WhatsApp groups in the name of different call centre, wherein applicant/accused Pradeep Sahu was the admin and applicant/accused Shalini Shivhare was a member of each such group.

14. Considering the overall facts and circumstances of the present case, custodial interrogation of the applicant/accused Pradeep Sahu, Shalini Shivhare, and Komal Pakhriya is required to reveal the larger conspiracy, the modus operandi adopted, and the involvement of other persons in the alleged gang engaged in operating a chain of fraudulent call centres. Having regard to the nature of the allegations, the initial stage of investigation, the likelihood of tampering with evidence and influencing witnesses, and the need for custodial interrogation, this Court is of the considered opinion that the applicants have failed to make out a case for grant of anticipatory bail.

15. The present bail applications are, accordingly, dismissed.

16. It is, however, clarified that nothing expressed hereinabove shall tantamount to an expression of opinion on merits of the case.

17. The order be uploaded on the website forthwith.

DR. SWARANA KANTA SHARMA, J

JANUARY 30, 2026/ns/R/GJ