

MHAH070001562026

**ORDER BELOW EXH-1 IN CRI. BAIL APPLICATION****NO.46/2026.****(Puja Ravindra Sonawane & Ors. Vs. The State of
Maharashtra)**

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**Cr.No.1086/2025 of Sangamner City Police Station, u.s.471, 470, 468, 467, 464, 463,
420 120-B r.w 34 of BNSS.**
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The applicant No.1 Puja Ravindra Sonwane, applicant No.2. Amit Sitaram Shelke and applicant No.3 Ramdas Laxman Suralkar anticipate arrest by Sangamner City Police in the alleged offence of forgery as well as cheating and have therefore, prayed for anticipatory bail.

2] It has been alleged that the applicant Ramdas Suralkar criminally conspired with the accused No.2, 4 and 5 for fraudulently selling a Church property (land and some old construction on it) by forging papers. The applicants and the co-accused knew that they had no concern with the church/trust namely The Executive Board Of The Methodist Church in India. However, the applicant No.1 got in touch with a person from Jabalpur, to show him as secretary of the trust and to fraudulently dispose of the trust property through him. For the said purpose, the applicant No.1 took from the co-accused James Louis his power of attorney so as to apply to the appropriate authorities for permission to sale the church property, although Mr. James Louis had no concern with the trust or it's property. A forged power of attorney document was created to show that the applicant No.1 was authorised to deal on behalf of secretary (co-accused James Louis).

3] In the beginning of the year 2023 the fake secretary of the trust (Mr. James Louis) executed an agreement to sell the trust land situated in Bota, Tal-Sangamner, Dist- Ahmednagar in favour of the co-accused Rahul Khatal and Ranjit Gaikwad and took an amount of Rs.10,00,000/- from them as a part of the consideration. Based on a forged document the applicants and the co-accused also resisted the updation of the Revenue Record of the suit property by the trust which was trying to update the new name of the trust.

4] The management of the trust found out about the said actions of the applicants and lodged a complaint before the Ld. Magistrate. The Magistrate directed an investigation under Section 156(3) of Cr.P.C. in the matter. An offence came to be registered accordingly. The applicants anticipate arrest under the said allegations.

5] It has been submitted on behalf of the applicant that they are innocent and that they have been implicated on the basis of false information. They claim to have no criminal antecedents and undertake to attend case dates regularly, once admitted to bail.

6] The application has been resisted by the I.O. as well as the Ld. A.P.P., mainly on the grounds that the alleged offence is serious in nature, that forged documents are to be seized, that the amount of Rs.10,00,000/- transacted based on the forged documents, is to be recovered, that the applicant would protract investigation if, they are admitted to anticipatory bail etc.

7] Heard the Ld. advocate for the informant. It has been stated that the applicant No.3 Ramdas Suralkar is the master mind of the alleged offence and who conspired to produce a fake person as secretary of the trust and fraudulently disposed of the trust property with the help of forged documents.

8] Heard both the sides. Although the applicants claim that they have simply signed the agreement to sale as witnesses, the statements of the witnesses show that the role of the applicants is far beyond just attesting the agreement. The applicant Ramdas has in his favour the power of attorney of the fake secretary Mr. James Louis. Mr. James Louis executed the agreement to sale in favour of the co-accused Rahul Khatal and Ranjit Gaikwad. Applicant Ramdas attested the said document. Even the applicants Puja and Amit have played an active role in conspiring with the fake secretary James Louis for the purpose of disposing of the property of the trust.

9] The documents annexed to the agreement for sale and the statements made by the informant show the exact role of the applicants. None of the applicants have any concern with the trust or the property which they tried to alienate. Fake secretary of trust (James Louis) was produced before the Sub-registrar for executing the agreement to sale in favour of co-accused Rahul Khatal and Ranjit Gaikwad.

10] The forged documents like memorandum of understanding, power of attorney, affidavit etc are to be seized. The amount of Rs.10,00,000/- involved in the alleged offence and which

has allegedly been distributed among the applicants, is to be recovered. The instruments used for the alleged forgery are to be seized. The co-accused James Louis is to be traced out. The investigation would be stalled and the alleged offence would not be detected if the applicants are protected from arrest. Custodial interrogation of the applicants seems to be indispensable for proper investigation. Chances of evidence tampering are high. I am, therefore, convinced that it is not a fit case for anticipatory bail. Hence, the orders.

Order

The anticipatory bail application stands rejected.

Sd/-

Date : 13.03.2026
Place : Sangamner

(Vivek B. Gavhane)
Addl. Sessions Judge,
Sangamner.