

MHST210002002026



IN THE COURT OF ADDITIONAL SESSIONS JUDGE, PHALTAN.

Criminal Bail Application No. 84 of 2026

Vaibhav Balaso SasteApplicant

V/s.

State of MaharashtraRespondent

Mr. S. M. Saste, Advocate for the applicant.

Mr. V. H. Katkar Addl. P.P. for the State.

**Coram: Mr. S. R. Tamboli,
I/c The Addl. Sessions Judge, Phaltan,**

::ORDER BELOW EXH.1::

01] In the present application, the applicant has prayed for bail under Section 483 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023.

02] The prosecution case, in brief, is that on 11.02.2026 the informant was contacted on WhatsApp by a woman identifying herself as "Prachi," who, after gaining his confidence through repeated calls and conversations, lured him to meet her at Phaltan on the pretext of a personal meeting. On 13.02.2026, she met the informant at the Phaltan S.T. stand and induced him to

follow her to a flat at Budhwar Peth, where, while they were talking, two unknown associates suddenly entered, questioned and intimidated him, and, along with three others waiting downstairs, forcibly took him to a secluded place near Phaltan airport. There, Prachi and her accomplices jointly abused, assaulted, and threatened the informant with a false rape case, thereby extorting money from him. One associate snatched his mobile phone, while others compelled him to accompany them on motorcycles and withdraw money from various ATMs, amounting to Rs.20,000/-, and also facilitated a fraudulent transaction of Rs.60,000/ through his credit card at a mobile shop. Additionally, a person using mobile number 9494127171, identified as "Raju Boke" through a payment scanner, demanded further payment, indicating coordinated involvement in the extortion. Under fear and coercion, the informant also handed over Rs.1,15,000/- in cash. After deleting the WhatsApp chats to destroy evidence, the accused persons returned his phone and dropped him near his vehicle. Subsequently, at about 9:00 p.m., two other associates intercepted the informant's car, assaulted him, and forcibly removed, a gold chain weighing approximately 200 grams from his neck before fleeing. Thus, the accused persons, acting in concert, executed a pre-planned scheme involving deceit by Prachi, physical intimidation by her accomplices, and coordinated extortion and robbery, resulting in wrongful loss to the informant to the extent of Rs.31,95,000/-.

03] In the backdrop of these facts, Mr. S. M. Saste, learned
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counsel for the applicant, submitted that the only allegation against the applicant is that he extorted the alleged amount from the informant. However, the informant has not identified the applicant. The informant has filed an affidavit stating that the name of the applicant has been included at the instance of the police. It is submitted that the applicant was not involved in the offence. It is further submitted that this Court has already released a co-accused on bail; therefore, the principle of parity is applicable to the case of the applicant. The applicant is having a permanent residence. Hence, he prayed that the applicant be released on bail.

04] Per contra, Mr. V. H. Katkar, learned Additional Public Prosecutor for the State, submitted that the applicant was involved in a conspiracy for extorting the ransom amount and also committed theft of a gold chain. It was further submitted that the applicant was seen in CCTV footage along with the informant and that an amount of Rs. 60,000/- was transferred to his account, which was subsequently returned to the informant's account. It is submitted that there is a prima facie case against the applicant. Hence, he prayed for rejection of the application.

05] The informant has filed say at Exh. 10 and has not opposed the application.

06] In the present case, the charge-sheet has been filed. The name of the applicant is mentioned in the FIR. However, the informant has not identified the applicant in the Test Identification Parade. The informant has also filed an affidavit stating that the

applicant is not involved in the offence. No doubt, there is material in the form of CCTV footage showing that the informant transferred an amount through a credit card. At this stage, it prima facie appears that no incident occurred at the relevant time. The informant has not identified the applicant. Therefore, there is no prima facie case against the applicant. The say of the Investigating Officer does not indicate that the applicant has any criminal antecedents. The trial will take its own time. No purpose will be served by detaining the applicant in jail. The applicant has a permanent residence, and it is less likely that he will abscond. The apprehension regarding tampering with evidence can be addressed by imposing stringent conditions. Hence, I am inclined to grant bail to the applicant and proceed to pass the following order:

ORDER

1. The application is allowed.
2. The applicant, Vaibhav Balaso Saste, in connection with Phaltan City Police Station C.R. No. 44/2026, be released on bail on furnishing a P.R. bond and one or more sureties in the sum of Rs. 50,000/-, subject to the following conditions:

(a) The applicant shall not directly or indirectly make any inducement, threat, or promise to any witness and shall not tamper with the prosecution evidence.

(b) The applicant shall attend the concerned Police Station as and when called by the Investigating Officer.

(c) The applicant and his sureties shall furnish their residential addresses and mobile numbers and shall not change the same without prior intimation to the Investigating Officer.

4. The order be communicated to the concerned Jail by e-mail.

Date- 04/06/2026

(S.R.Tamboli)
I/c. Addl. Sessions Judge, Phaltan