

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

THE HONOURABLE SRI JUSTICE N.TUKARAMJI

CRIMINAL PETITION No. 10449 OF 2026

DATE: 16.07.2026

Between :

Angari Shankar

... Petitioner/Accused No.6

AND

The State of Telangana, Represented by its Public Prosecutor,
High Court for the State of Telangana at Hyderabad, Through
Station House Officer, Metpally Police Station, Jagtial District,
and another.

... Respondents.

ORDER

This Criminal Petition is filed under Section 482 of the *Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023* (for short, "BNSS"), seeking the relief of pre-arrest bail.

2. The petitioner is arrayed as Accused No.6 in FIR No. 155 of 2026 of Metpally Police Station, Jagtial, for the offences punishable under Sections 318(4), 336(2), 340(2), 335, 337, 341(1)(2)(4) read with Section 3(5) of the *Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023* (for short, "BNS").

3. Heard Mr. Almula Vinay Kumar, learned counsel for the petitioner and Mr. Syed Yasar Mamoon, learned Additional Public Prosecutor, representing respondent No.1-State.

4.1. Briefly stated, the prosecution case is that the Tahsildar & Executive Magistrate, Metpally, lodged a report alleging that certain persons had prepared and used a forged 'Abadi' Certificate by fabricating the signature and official seal of the Tahsildar. The alleged fabrication came to light upon verification of a complaint seeking a certified copy of a certificate purportedly issued by the Tahsildar's Office in connection with Registration Document No. 36 of 2026. Upon verification, it was found that no such certificate had ever been issued and that the forged document had been used for registration. Based on the said report, the present crime came to be registered.

4.2. It is further stated that the investigation revealed that the petitioner and the other accused entered into a criminal conspiracy to create a false 'Abadi' Certificate in respect of land situated in Survey No. 191/E of Chelgal Village, Metpally Mandal, by forging the signature and official seal of the Tahsildar & Executive Magistrate. The forged certificate was thereafter used for the execution and registration of Sale Deed bearing Document No. 36 of 2026. The investigation further revealed that the application file number mentioned in the alleged certificate pertained to an altogether different subject relating to land acquired for the Railway Project, thereby confirming

that the certificate produced before the registering authority was not genuine. The specific allegation against the petitioner (Accused No. 6) is that he supplied the fake official rubber stamps used in the preparation of the forged certificate after receiving an amount of Rs.1,500/-, thereby facilitating the commission of the alleged offences.

5.1. Learned counsel for the petitioner submits that the petitioner is innocent and has been falsely implicated in the present case merely because he is a rubber stamp maker. He further contends that the petitioner was engaged in the lawful preparation of rubber stamps, and that a mere allegation of preparing or supplying a rubber stamp, without any independent material establishing his knowledge of or involvement in the alleged forgery, cannot attract criminal liability. It is further contended that no forged rubber stamps, machinery, equipment, materials, or any other incriminating articles were recovered from the possession of the petitioner. On the contrary, the alleged forged document, computer system, and fake seal had already been seized from the principal accused during the course of investigation. Therefore, according to the learned counsel, custodial interrogation of the petitioner is not required. It is further submitted that the implication of the petitioner is primarily based on the alleged confession statement of a co-accused, which, by itself, cannot constitute the sole basis either for arrest or for denial of the protection sought. Learned counsel also submits that the principal accused, from whom the alleged recoveries were effected, have already been enlarged on regular bail, and that Accused No. 5 has also

been granted protection by this Court. It is further pleaded that the petitioner has no criminal antecedents and is willing to cooperate with the investigation and abide by any conditions that may be imposed by this Court. On these grounds, learned counsel prays that anticipatory bail be granted.

6. Learned Additional Public Prosecutor opposed the petition, contending that the allegations levelled against the petitioner are grave in nature and disclose his active participation in the commission of offences relating to the forgery of Government records, fabrication of an official seal, cheating, and the use of forged documents. It is submitted that the investigation has revealed that the accused entered into a criminal conspiracy and prepared a forged 'Abadi' Certificate by fabricating the signature and official seal of the Tahsildar & Executive Magistrate, Metpally. It is further submitted that the investigation is still in progress and that the custodial interrogation of the petitioner is necessary to ascertain the source, preparation, and circulation of the forged official seal, as well as to determine whether similar seals had been prepared or supplied for use in any other transactions. On these grounds, the learned Additional Public Prosecutor prayed for dismissal of the petition

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

8. A careful perusal of the material on record indicates that the allegation against the present petitioner (Accused No. 6) is confined to his alleged role

in arranging or preparing the rubber stamp purportedly used in the commission of the offence. Prima facie, there is no allegation that he participated in preparing the forged certificate, fabricated the signature of the public servant, or personally used the forged document before the registering authority. The prosecution case against the petitioner is substantially founded on the alleged confession of a co-accused. At this stage, no independent material is placed on record to indicate the petitioner's direct involvement beyond the allegation of supplying the rubber stamp.

9. It is well settled that while considering an application for anticipatory bail, the Court must balance the individual's fundamental right to personal liberty with the societal interest in ensuring a fair and effective investigation. The relevant considerations include the nature and gravity of the accusation, the specific role attributed to the accused, the likelihood of absconding, tampering with evidence or influencing witnesses, the antecedents of the accused, and whether custodial interrogation is genuinely necessary for the purposes of investigation.

10. In *Siddharam Satlingappa Mhetre v. State of Maharashtra*, (2011) 1 SCC 694, the Hon'ble Supreme Court held that arrest should not be made as a matter of routine and that personal liberty enjoys the highest degree of constitutional protection unless the investigating agency demonstrates compelling reasons necessitating custodial interrogation. The same principle

was reiterated in *Arnesh Kumar v. State of Bihar*, (2014) 8 SCC 273, wherein the Hon'ble Supreme Court cautioned against unnecessary arrests and emphasized that arrest is not punitive in nature but must be resorted to only when indispensable for the purposes of investigation.

11. In the present case, the material objects allegedly used in the commission of the offence, including the forged seal, machinery, equipment, and other incriminating articles, have already been seized from the possession of the other accused. The petitioner is a permanent resident, has no criminal antecedents, and has expressed his willingness to cooperate with the investigation. There is no material to suggest that he is likely to abscond, tamper with the prosecution evidence, or influence witnesses. It is also significant that Accused No. 5 has already been granted anticipatory bail. Although the principle of parity is not absolute and each case must be decided on its own facts, it remains a relevant consideration where the role attributed to the accused is comparable and no distinguishing circumstances have been brought on record.

12. Having regard to the nature of the allegations, the material collected during the investigation, and the absence of any substantive material demonstrating the necessity for custodial interrogation, this Court is satisfied that the petitioner has made out a fit case for grant of anticipatory bail. Accordingly, the petitioner is entitled to the relief of anticipatory bail, subject

to appropriate conditions to secure his cooperation with the investigation and to safeguard the interests of justice.

13. Accordingly, the Criminal Petition is allowed, subject to the following conditions:

(A) The petitioner/Accused No.6 shall surrender before the Station House Officer, Metpally Police Station, Jagtial District, on or before 30.07.2026. Upon such surrender or in the event of arrest, the Station House Officer shall release the petitioner/Accused No.6 on bail on execution of personal bonds 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 petitioner/Accused No.6 shall appear before the Investigating Officer on every Saturday between 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. for a period of ten (10) weeks from the date of his release on bail and shall cooperate with the investigation in all respects.

(C) The petitioner/Accused No.6 shall not leave India without obtaining prior permission from the jurisdictional Court concerned.

(D) The petitioner/Accused No.6 shall furnish his complete residential address, mobile number and other contact particulars to the Investigating Officer and shall promptly intimate any change therein.

(E) The petitioner/Accused No.6 shall not directly or indirectly induce, threaten, influence, or promise any person acquainted with the

facts of the case, nor shall he tamper with prosecution evidence in any manner whatsoever.

(F) The petitioner/Accused No.6 shall strictly comply with all the conditions contemplated under Section 482(2) of the BNSS.

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

14. It is made clear that any observations made herein are confined solely to the adjudication of the present application for anticipatory bail and shall not be construed as an expression on the merits of the case. Pending miscellaneous applications, if any, shall stand closed.

N.TUKARAMJI, J

Date: 16.07.2026

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