



IN THE HIGH COURT OF ORISSA AT CUTTACK

ABLAPL No.8997 of 2026
CNR No.ODHC010573812026

Sudhanshu Sekhar Rout ***Petitioner***

Ms. P. Naidu, Advocate
on behalf of Mr. R. R. Mishra, Advocate
-versus-

State of Odisha ***Opposite Party***
Mr. S. Panigrahi, ASC

CORAM: JUSTICE V. NARASINGH

ORDER
06.08.2026

Order No.

- 01.** 1. Heard learned counsel for the Petitioner and learned counsel for the State.
2. The Petitioner is seeking pre-arrest bail in connection with C.T. Case No.1736 of 2026 pending on the file of learned S.D.J.M, Bhubaneswar arising out of Capital P.S. Case No.561 of 2026 for commission of offences punishable under Sections 353, 196 and 356 of BNS, 2023.
3. The gist of the FIR runs thus:-

“The prosecution case in brief is that the complainant, lodged an FIR before the IIC, Capital Police Station, Bhubaneswar,



against Sri Sudhansu Sekhar Rout. Editor-in-Chief of Focus Plus. The complaint alleges that on 12.07.2026, during an Odisha Swabhiman Mancha programme, the accused falsely claimed that the Honble Minister. Sri Nityananda Gond, attempted to bribe him to suppress reports regarding alleged textbook errors. The video containing these allegations was allegedly uploaded and widely circulated on Facebook and other social media platforms. The complainant states that the allegations are false, fabricated, malicious, and defamatory, asserting that neither the Minister nor his office ever offered any bribe or attempted to influence media reporting. It is alleged that the accused intentionally published the statements to tamish the Ministers reputation, create distrust against the Government, and mislead the public. The complaint further states that the circulation of the video has caused significant reputational harm and may disturb public order and confidence in the Government. On this report Addl IIC of Capital PS regd Capital PS case no 561 Dt.



14.07.2026 U/s 353/196/356 BNS and directed Insp G Ch Sahoo to take up investigation of case.”

4. It is submitted by the learned counsel that even if the entire allegations are accepted at its face value, the custodial interrogation of the Petitioner is not warranted. Hence, the Petitioner may be protected by pre-arrest bail.

5. Learned counsel for the State, Mr. Panigrahi, ASC vehemently opposes the prayer for pre-arrest bail referring to the materials on record including 183 BNSS statement of one of the correspondents working under the Petitioner. It is further submitted that Petitioner has the following criminal antecedents:-

1. Dharmasala PS Case No-217 dt 27.05.2022 U/S-115(2)/117(2)/120(3) 296/308(3)/351(2) BNS/Sec-25/27 Arms Act 1

2. Dharmasala PS Case No-216 dt 27.05.2026 U/S-112(2)/317(2)/317(4)/317(5)/318(4)/61(2) BNS/R. W Sec-66-C/66-D IT Act

3. Dharmasala PS Case No-214 dt 27.05.2026 U/S-



115(2)/117(2)/126(2)/202/296//308(3)/3
51(2) BNS/RW Sec-25/27 Arms Act
4. Pallahara PS Case No-199 dt 31.07.2022
U/S-294/501/506/34 IPC
5. Ambadola PS Case No-25 dt 17.02.2026
U/S-308(2)/308(3)/356(2)/351(3)/3(5)
BNS
6. Mahila PS Case No-163 dt 05.10.2023
U/S-498(A)/323/307/294/506/34 IPC
7. Mahila PS Case No-126 dt 19.05.2025
U/S-294/296/356(2)/75(3)/77/79/3(5)
BNS
8. Jagatpur PS Case No-87 dt 18.02.2025
U/S-
9. Jagat Pur PS Case No-118 dt 26.02.2025
U/S-281 BNS/Sec-181/184/185 MV Act 10.
Laxmisagar PS Case No-360 dt 03.07.2025
U/S-324(2)/308(2)/351(2)/318(2)/3(5)
BNS
126(2)/115(2)/296/294(2)(a)/356(2)/356(
3)/356(4)/351(2)(3)/3(5) B NS
11. Khandagiri PS Case No-74 dt
29.01.2026 U/S-296/351/3(5)/85 BNS
12. Infocity PS Case No-207 dt 19.05.2025
U/S-63 Copy Right Act



13. Sahidnagar PS Case No-123 dt 25.03.2023 nU/S-153(A)/294/295(B)/293/186/195(A)/505(1)/506/509 IPC
14. Infocity PS Case No-590 dt 14.12.2024 U/S-352/353 BNS/ Sec-66-E IT Act
15. Jatni PS Case No-167 dt 05.10.2023 U/S-394/323/498(A) IPC/Sec-4 DP Act
16. Capital PS Case No-194 dt 19.03.2026 U/S-308(3)/356(3) BNS
17. Cyber PS Case No-28 dt 25.03.2023 U/S-294/323/506/509 IPC/Sec-67 IT Act
18. Badagada PS Case No-198 dt 26.03.2026 U/S-296(b)/351(2) BNS
19. Bharat Pur PS Case No-459 dt 26.05.2026 U/S-308(6) BNS
20. Chandra Sekhar Pur PS Case No-716 dt 20.07.2026 U/S-126(2)/61(2)(a)329(2)/332(a)/352/296(b)/356(4)/3(5)/308(5)/351(3) BNS."

6. Per contra, referring to the criminal antecedents, it is submitted by the learned counsel for the Petitioner that because of the antecedents, he is an easy prey and that ought not to weigh with this Court in considering the allegations, which are the subject matter of the present bail application



and ex facie improbable. It is her further submissions that some of the co-accused who were taken into custody have since been released on bail. Therefore, the Petitioner may be released on pre-arrest bail.

7. Considering the materials on record and perusal of the statement of the correspondent, who works under the Petitioner, recorded under Section 183 of BNSS and other statements, this Court is not inclined to entertain the application of the Petitioner for grant of "exceptional remedy" of pre-arrest bail. The same accordingly stands rejected.

8. It is needless to state that the observations made hereinabove are only for the purpose of considering the ABLAPL and ought not to be construed as the Court expressing any opinion regarding the complicity of the Petitioner. The accusation qua the Petitioner has to be established in an independent manner in the ongoing probe.

9. Accordingly, the ABLAPL stands disposed of.

(V. NARASINGH)
Judge

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