

**IN THE SUPREME COURT OF INDIA
CRIMINAL APPELLATE JURISDICTION**

CRIMINAL APPEAL NO.2260/2022

ANANTHA SATYA UDAYA BHASKARA RAO @ ANANTHA BABU

APPELLANT(S)

VERSUS

THE STATE OF ANDHRA PRADESH & ANR.

RESPONDENT(S)

O R D E R

1. The appellant herein is stated to be a sitting member of the Legislative Council in Andhra Pradesh and belongs to a political party, which is now in opposition. He is accused in FIR No.195/2022, registered at Police Station Sarpavaram, Andhra Pradesh, under Sections 302, 201 and 34 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860 (in short, the 'IPC') and Section 3(2)(v) of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989.

2. Conscious of the fact that any observation by this Court at this stage may cause prejudice to the parties, we nevertheless find no reason, upon perusal of the impugned order, to doubt that the police/investigating agency has been hobnobbing with the appellant-accused. All efforts have been made to offer him default bail under Section 167(2) of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973, on a platter. However, the High Court turned down such a prayer, which has given

rise to these proceedings.

3. When the instant appeal came up for hearing on 12.12.2022, this Court granted leave and directed that the appellant be released on bail. He has, thus, been enjoying the benefit of interim bail for more than 2 ½ years.

4. On our repeated query, Mr. Sidharth Luthra, learned Senior Counsel for the State of Andhra Pradesh, informs us that till date only a supplementary charge-sheet has been filed. We are constrained to observe that this again shows laxity, if not complicity, on the part of the State police with the accused, exhibiting the highest degree of negligence in the investigation of a heinous offence.

5. In this light and in order to strike a balance between the right to liberty on one hand and fair trial to the victim of the crime and his family, we dispose of this appeal with the following directions:

(i) We request the Hon'ble Chief Justice of the Andhra Pradesh High Court to entrust the trial of this matter to a fairly Senior Judicial Officer, who shall take it up on a weekly basis.

(ii) Simultaneously, if any further investigation is required, the same shall also be completed by 31.03.2026.

(iii) The issue regarding framing of charges shall be decided

by 18.04.2026.

(iv) The prosecution is directed to produce the entire evidence within a period of four months, i.e., by 31.08.2026. In the first instance, the eye-witnesses and other material witnesses shall be examined.

(v) The Trial Court shall grant a reasonable time to the appellant to lead defence evidence, if any, within a period of two months.

(vi) The trial must come to an end by 30.11.2026.

6. With a view to facilitating the conclusion of the trial in a time-bound manner, the High Court is requested to spare the Judicial Officer largely from other matters so that the current trial proceedings can be taken up at least once a week.

7. We request the Portfolio-cum-Administrative Judge of the High Court to monitor the ongoing trial only for the limited purpose of compliance with the directions issued hereinabove.

8. The appellant's continuation on bail shall entirely depend upon his conduct during the pendency of these proceedings. If it is found that he has made any direct or indirect attempt to influence the witnesses or tamper with the prosecution evidence, the necessary consequences must

follow.

9. The High Court is requested not to pass any interim order staying the trial, and if any such issue arises, the parties shall be at liberty to approach this Court.

.....CJI.
(SURYA KANT)

.....J.
(JOYMALYA BAGCHI)

.....J.
(VIPUL M. PANCHOLI)

NEW DELHI;
FEBRUARY 20, 2026

S U P R E M E C O U R T O F I N D I A
R E C O R D O F P R O C E E D I N G S

Criminal Appeal No(s).2260/2022

ANANTHA SATYA UDAYA BHASKARA RAO @ ANANTHA BABU Appellant(s)
VERSUS

THE STATE OF ANDHRA PRADESH & ANR. Respondent(s)

IA No.194607/2022 - PERMISSION TO FILE ADDITIONAL
DOCUMENTS/FACTS/ANNEXURES, IA No. 167403/2022 - PERMISSION TO FILE
ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS/FACTS/ANNEXURES

Date : 20-02-2026 This matter was called on for hearing today.

CORAM : HON'BLE THE CHIEF JUSTICE
HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE JOYMALYA BAGCHI
HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE VIPUL M. PANCHOLI

For Appellant(s) : Mr. S Nagamuthu, Sr. Adv.
Mr. Ananga Bhattacharyya, Adv.
Ms. Devahuti Tamuli, Adv.
Mr. Krishanu Barua, Adv.
M/S. Veritas Legis, AOR

For Respondent(s) : Mr. Sidharth Luthra, Sr. Adv.
Mr. Guntur Pramod Kumar, AOR
Ms. Prerna Singh, Adv.
Mr. Karl P Rustomkhan, Adv.
Mr. Sohail Ahmed, Adv.
Mr. Parv Arora, Adv.

Mr. Yelamanchili Shiva Santosh Kumar, Adv.
Mr. Rudrajit Ghosh, Adv.
Mr. Avi Leuna, Adv.
Mr. Ritik Raj, Adv.
Mr. Tarun Gupta, AOR

UPON hearing the counsel the Court made the following
O R D E R

1. The appeal is disposed of in terms of the signed order.
2. All pending applications, if any, also stand disposed of.

(ARJUN BISHT)
ASTT. REGISTRAR-cum-PS

(PREETHI T.C.)
ASSISTANT REGISTRAR
(signed order is placed on the file)