

THE HIGH COURT OF SINDH AT KARACHI

Criminal Bail Application No.1159 of 2026

Applicant : Khayyam Uddin Siddiqui through
M/s. Syed Shariq Imam and
Muhammad Imran Baig, Advocates

Respondent : The State through Mr. Sharaf-u-Din
Kanhra, Assistant Prosecutor
General, Sindh

Date of hearing : 20.08.2026

Date of decision : 20.08.2026

ORDER

Jan Ali Junejo, J.- Through this Criminal Bail Application, Applicant—Khayyam Uddin Siddiqui son of Riaz Uddin Siddiqui, seeks pre-arrest bail in FIR No.534 of 2022, registered at Police Station Ferozabad, Karachi, for offence under Section 489-F, 420 PPC, calling in question the Order dated 9.04.2026, passed by IVth Additional Sessions Judge Karachi East, whereby, his pre-arrest bail application was dismissed. The Applicant was granted ad-interim pre-arrest bail by this Court vide Order dated: 22.04.2026.

2. The brief facts of the prosecution case, as set out in the FIR, are that on 24.06.2022 at about 1400 hours, Complainant, namely, Javed son of Mubarak Ali, lodged an FIR at Police Station Ferozabad, Karachi, alleging therein that he was a Legal Manager of Audiotech Technology PCS, engaged in the sale of tablets and other electronic items on cash and credit basis across Pakistan. During the course of business, various cheques were received from different persons, including the present Applicant, which were deposited into the Company's account maintained with Habib Metropolitan Bank, SMCHS Block-A, Karachi, for encashment; however, the said cheques were dishonoured upon presentation; hence, the instant FIR.

3. Learned Counsel for the Applicant argued that the Applicant is innocent and has falsely been implicated in this case by the Complainant to pressurize him for recovery of a disputed commercial amount. He further argued that FIR was lodged with an inordinate delay of about two years and six months without any plausible explanation and that the essential ingredients of Section 489-F PPC, including dishonest intention

and *mens rea* at the time of issuance of cheques are completely missing. He further argued that there is no direct or indirect evidence connecting the Applicant with the commission of offence. He further argued that Section 489-F PPC is not hit by the prohibitory clause of Section 497 Cr.PC, and that the Applicant has joined the investigation and has not misused the concession of interim protection; therefore, he prays that the pre-arrest bail may be confirmed.

4. Learned Assistant Prosecutor General, Sindh argues that the offence is duly reflected from the contents of the FIR and supporting material, that the cheques were dishonoured, and that sufficient *prima facie* material is available to connect the Applicant with the commission of the offence. He contends that pre-arrest bail is an extraordinary relief which cannot be granted as a matter of course, particularly where the accused has allegedly misused earlier concessions, and therefore he prays that the present pre-arrest bail application be dismissed.

5. I have given thoughtful consideration to the arguments advanced by the learned Counsel for the Applicant as well as Assistant Prosecutor General, Sindh and have carefully examined the record with a tentative assessment, as is permissible at the bail stage. It is well settled that pre-arrest bail is an extraordinary relief, intended to protect innocent persons from abuse of the process of law, undue harassment, humiliation, or mala fide arrest. At this stage, the Court is not required to undertake a deeper appreciation of evidence; rather, it is to make a tentative assessment of the material available on record. For attracting the provisions of Section 489-F, P.P.C., the prosecution is required, at least *prima facie*, to establish the following essential ingredients: (i) issuance of a cheque by the accused; (ii) issuance of such cheque dishonestly; (iii) existence of a legally enforceable debt, liability, or obligation; (iv) knowledge or *mens rea* at the time of issuance that the cheque would be dishonoured; and (v) dishonour of the cheque upon its presentation. It is by now settled law that mere dishonour of a cheque, by itself, does not constitute an offence under Section 489-F, P.P.C., unless all the aforesaid ingredients coexist. A careful perusal of the FIR and annexed material reveals that admittedly there is a business of sale and purchase of tablets and other electronic items on cash and credit basis across Pakistan. The prosecution record is silent as to when, where, and in what manner the alleged cheques were issued by the present Applicant in discharge of any liability. The mode of transaction, consideration, and foundation of liability has not been disclosed, which are fundamental prerequisites for invoking Section 489-F PPC. Equally significant is the fact that the FIR does not

allege any dishonest intention (mens rea) on the part of the present Applicant at the time of issuance of the cheques. There is no assertion that the Applicant knowingly issued the cheques with the intention that it would be dishonoured. In the absence of such allegation, the essential element of dishonesty, being the soul of Section 489-F PPC, remains unestablished at this stage.

6. In view of the absence of: privity of contract and allegation of dishonest intention made out the case of further inquiry, the core ingredients of Section 489-F PPC cannot be conclusively determined without recording of evidence. These aspects require deeper probe and proper appreciation at trial. Consequently, the case, so far as the present Applicant is concerned, squarely falls within the ambit of “further inquiry” as envisaged under Section 497(2) Cr.P.C.

7. It is further observed that: The FIR has been lodged after a considerable unexplained delay; The alleged transaction appears to be predominantly business of sale and purchase of tablets and other electronic items on cash and credit basis across Pakistan; The offence does not fall within the prohibitory clause of Section 497 Cr.P.C.; and bail is not to be withheld as a measure of punishment.

8. In similar circumstances, where bail was granted in an offence under Section 489-F, P.P.C. i.e., ***Ali Anwar Paracha v. The State and another (2024 SCMR 1596)***, the Honourable Supreme Court of Pakistan held that: *“In this view of the matter, the question whether the cheque was issued towards fulfilment of an obligation within the meaning of section 489-F, P.P.C. is a question, which would be resolved by the learned Trial Court after recording of evidence. The petitioner is behind the bars since his arrest. The maximum punishment provided under the statute for the offence under section 489- F, P.P.C. is three years and the same does not fall within the prohibitory clause of section 497, Cr.P.C. It is settled law that grant of bail in the offences not falling within the prohibitory clause is a rule and refusal is an exception”*. In another similar offence under Section 489-F, P.P.C., in the case of ***Muhammad Anwar v. The State and another (2024 SCMR 1567)***, the Honourable Supreme Court of Pakistan was pleased to grant bail by observing that: *“In view of the above, the question whether the cheques were issued towards repayment of loan or fulfillment of an obligation within the meaning of Section 489-F, P.P.C. is a question, which would be resolved by the learned Trial Court after recording of evidence. The maximum punishment provided under the statute for the offence under Section 489-F, P.P.C. is three years and the same does not fall within the prohibitory clause of Section 497, Cr.P.C. It*

is settled law that grant of bail in the offences not falling within the prohibitory clause is a rule and refusal is an exception”.

9. Keeping in view the settled principles of law governing pre-arrest bail, this Court is of the tentative view that the Applicant has made out a case for confirmation of pre-arrest bail. Consequently, the ad-interim pre-arrest bail granted to the Applicant *vide* Order dated 22.04.2026 in Crime No.534 of 2022, registered at Police Station Ferozabad, Karachi, for offence under Section 489-F, 420 PPC, is hereby confirmed, subject to the same terms and conditions. The observations herein are tentative and confined to the decision of bail. The trial Court shall not be influenced thereby and shall adjudicate strictly on the evidence led before it.

JUDGE

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