

IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB & HARYANA
AT CHANDIGARH

Crl. Misc. No. M-39103 of 2014 (O&M)
Date of decision : 05.02.2015

Amrinder Pal Singh @ RajaPetitioner

versus

State of Punjab and another ...Respondents

CORAM: HON'BLE MS. JUSTICE RITU BAHRI

Present: Mr. P.S. Punia, Advocate,
for the petitioner

Mr. Daljeet Singh Virk, AAG, Punjab

Mr. G.S. Jagpal, Advocate
for respondent No. 2

RITU BAHRI, J. (Oral)

Quashing of FIR No. 132 dated 01.11.2013 under Sections 307/324/341/34 IPC, registered at P.S. Divn. No. 4, Distt Ludhiana, is being sought on the basis of compromise dated 23.12.2013 (Annexure P-1).

F.I.R has been registered on the statement of respondent No. 2 against the petitioner with the allegations that the petitioner along with other co-accused Pratap @ Pankaj had given injuries to the complainant with a sharp edge weapon with an intention to kill him.

Pratap @ Pankaj being juvenile at the time of occurrence had filed a petition CRM-M-7180 of 2014 along with the present petitioner for quashing of the above said F.I.R. This Court, vide order dated 26.09.2014 allowed the petition and quashed the F.I.R qua Pratap @ Pankaj only and petitioner qua the present petition was dismissed.

Learned counsel for the petitioner submits that the injury is on the head of the complainant and this injury has been attributed to the

present petitioner. But as per MLR (P-4), there were five injuries on the person of the complainant out of which injury No. 3,4 and 5 were declared simple in nature and injury No. 1 and 2 were referred to X-ray (P-4) and as per x-ray report no bony injury was found (P-5). Learned counsel for the petitioner further submits that CRM-M-7180 of 2014 was dismissed qua petitioner as the report qua petitioner has not been received on that date.

At the stage of recording of prosecution evidence, the matter has been duly compromised between the parties, vide compromise deed 23.12.2013 (Annexure P-1)

In compliance of order dated 20.11.2014, report of District & Sessions Judge, Ludhiana has been received and statement of complainant-Ravi Kant has been recorded to the effect that he had compromised the matter with the accused person and has no grudge against him, as he is a neighbourer of the complainant. He has no objection, if the present F.I.R be quashed against the petitioner. Statement of petitioner has been recorded to the same effect. The compromise has been entered voluntarily and without any pressure.

Since the offence under Section 307 IPC is non compoundable, reference at this stage can be made to a judgment of Hon'ble the Supreme Court in a case of Narinder Singh and others v. State of Punjab and others, 2014 (2) R.C.R (Criminal) 482 wherein the provisions with regarding to compounding of the offences and quashing have been considered in relation to offence under Section 307 IPC. In paragraph 31, principles have been laid down for invoking jurisdiction under Section 482 of the Code while accepting the settlement and quashing the proceedings or refusing to accept the settlement with direction to continue with the criminal proceedings, which reads as

under:-

(I) Power conferred under Section 482 of the Code is to be distinguished from the power which lies in the Court to compound the offences under Section 320 of the Code. No doubt, under Section 482 of the Code, the High Court has inherent power to quash the criminal proceedings even in those cases which are not compoundable, where the parties have settled the matter between themselves. However, this power is to be exercised sparingly and with caution.

(II) When the parties have reached the settlement and on that basis petition for quashing the criminal proceedings is filed, the guiding factor in such cases would be to secure:

(i) ends of justice, or

(ii) to prevent abuse of the process of any Court. While exercising the power the High Court is to form an opinion on either of the aforesaid two objectives.

(iii) Such a power is not to be exercised in those prosecutions which involve heinous and serious offences of mental depravity or offences like murder, rape, dacoity, etc. Such offences are not private in nature and have a serious impact on society. Similarly, for offences alleged to have been committed under special statute like the Prevention of Corruption Act or the offences committed by Public Servants while working in that capacity are not to be quashed merely on the basis of compromise between the victim and the offender.

(IV) On the other, those criminal cases having overwhelmingly and pre-dominantly civil character, particularly those arising out of commercial transactions or arising out of matrimonial relationship or family disputes should be quashed when the parties have resolved their entire disputes among themselves.

(V) While exercising its powers, the High Court is to examine as to whether the possibility of conviction is remote and bleak and continuation of criminal cases would put the accused to great oppression and prejudice and extreme injustice would be caused to him by not quashing the criminal cases.

(VI) Offences under Section 307 IPC would fall in the category of heinous and serious offences and therefore is to be generally treated as crime against the society and not against the individual alone. However, the High Court would not rest its decision merely

because there is a mention of Section 307 IPC in the FIR or the charge is framed under this provision. It would be open to the High Court to examine as to whether incorporation of Section 307 IPC is there for the sake of it or the prosecution has collected sufficient evidence, which if proved, would lead to proving the charge under Section 307 IPC. For this purpose, it would be open to the High Court to go by the nature of injury sustained, whether such injury is inflicted on the vital/delegate parts of the body, nature of weapons used etc. Medical report in respect of injuries suffered by the victim can generally be the guiding factor. On the basis of this prima facie analysis, the High Court can examine as to whether there is a strong possibility of conviction or the chances of conviction are remote and bleak. In the former case it can refuse to accept the settlement and quash the criminal proceedings whereas in the later case it would be permissible for the High Court to accept the plea compounding the offence based on complete settlement between the parties. At this stage, the Court can also be swayed by the fact that the settlement between the parties is going to result in harmony between them which may improve their future relationship.

(VII) While deciding whether to exercise its power under Section 482 of the Code or not, timings of settlement play a crucial role. Those cases where the settlement is arrived at immediately after the alleged commission of offence and the matter is still under investigation, the High Court may be liberal in accepting the settlement to quash the criminal proceedings/investigation. It is because of the reason that at this stage the investigation is still on and even the charge sheet has not been filed. Likewise, those cases where the charge is framed but the evidence is yet to start or the evidence is still at infancy stage, the High Court can show benevolence in exercising its powers favourably, but after prima facie assessment of the circumstances/material mentioned above. On the other hand, where the prosecution evidence is almost complete or after the conclusion of the evidence the matter is at the stage of argument, normally the High Court should refrain from exercising its power under Section 482 of the Code, as in such cases the trial court would be in a position to decide the case finally on merits and to come a conclusion as to whether the offence under Section 307 IPC is committed or not. Similarly, in those cases where the conviction is already recorded by the trial court and the matter

is at the appellate stage before the High Court, mere compromise between the parties would not be a ground to accept the same resulting in acquittal of the offender who has already been convicted by the trial court. Here charge is proved under Section 307 IPC and conviction is already recorded of a heinous crime and, therefore, there is no question of sparing a convict found guilty of such a crime.

After going through the status report and compromise deed (P-1), the Court is satisfied that the compromise arrived at between the parties is genuine and without any pressure or coercion and no useful purpose would be served by continuing the criminal proceedings. Further this is a case of simple injury as per MLR report and X-ray report.

The matter was compromised at the stage of recording of evidence of prosecution witnesses and as per the guidelines laid above that where the the possibility of conviction is remote and bleak and continuation of criminal cases would put the accused to great oppression and prejudice and extreme injustice would be caused to him by not quashing the criminal cases, this Court can quash the further proceedings.

Further, the larger Bench in Gian Singh vs. State of Punjab and another 2012(4) RCR Criminal 543 after considering the relevant provisions of the Code of Criminal Procedure and the judgments of this Court, concluded as under:-

57. The position that emerges from the above discussion can be summarised thus: the power of the High Court in quashing a criminal proceeding or FIR or complaint in exercise of its inherent jurisdiction is distinct and different from the power given to a criminal court for compounding the offences under Section 320 of the Code . Inherent power is of wide plenitude with no statutory limitation but it has to be exercised in accord with the guideline engrafted in such power viz ; (i) to secure the ends of justice or (ii) to prevent abuse of the process of any Court . In what cases power to quash the criminal proceeding or complaint or F.I.R may be exercised where the offender and victim have settled their dispute

would depend on the facts and circumstances of each case and no category can be prescribed. However, before exercise of such power, the High Court must have due regard to the nature and gravity of the crime. Heinous and serious offences of mental depravity or offences like murder, rape, dacoity, etc. cannot be fittingly quashed even though the victim or victim's family and the offender have settled the dispute. Such offences are not private in nature and have serious impact on society. Similarly, any compromise between the victim and offender in relation to the offences under special statutes like Prevention of Corruption Act or the offences committed by public servants while working in that capacity etc; cannot provide for any basis for quashing criminal proceedings involving such offences. But the criminal cases having overwhelmingly and predominatingly civil flavour stand on different footing for the purposes of quashing, particularly the offences arising from commercial, financial, mercantile, civil, partnership or such like transactions or the offences arising out of matrimony relating to dowry, etc. or the family disputes where the wrong is basically private or personal in nature and the parties have resolved their entire dispute. In this category of cases, High Court may quash criminal proceedings if in its view, because of the compromise between the offender and victim, the possibility of conviction is remote and bleak and continuation of criminal case would put accused to great oppression and prejudice and extreme injustice would be caused to him by not quashing the criminal case despite full and complete settlement and compromise with the victim. In other words, the High Court must consider whether it would be unfair or contrary to the interest of justice to continue with the criminal proceeding or continuation of the criminal proceeding would tantamount to abuse of process of law despite settlement and compromise between the victim and wrongdoer and whether to secure the ends of justice, it is appropriate that criminal case is put to an end and if the answer to the above question(s) is in affirmative, the High Court shall be well within its jurisdiction to quash the criminal proceeding."

Thus this Court has no hesitation in accepting the compromise, even though it was compromised at the stage of trial, as no useful purpose would be served in prolonging the litigation, as the

parties have resolved their dispute amicably and the F.I.R qua co-accused Pratap @ Pankaj has already been quashed by this Court.

Applying the ratio of the judgment of Narinder Singh's case (supra) to the facts of the present case, FIR No. 132 dated 01.11.2013 under Sections 307/324/341/34 IPC, registered at P.S. Divn. No. 4, Distt Ludhiana, is quashed with all consequential proceedings arising therefrom qua petitioner.

The petition stands disposed of.

05.02.2015
G Arora

(RITU BAHRI)
JUDGE