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*** IN THE HIGH COURT OF DELHI AT NEW DELHI**

Judgment delivered on: 31st July, 2015

+ CRL.M.C. 2226/2015

RATNESH KUMAR SINGH & ORS. Petitioner

Represented by: Mr. Anil Basoya and
Mr. Ashok Bansal, Advs.

Versus

THE STATE (NCT OF DELHI) & ORS Respondents

Represented by: Mr. M.N. Dudeja, APP
for State with Insp. Sanjeev Kumar, PS-
Con. Place.

CORAM:

HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE SURESH KAIT

SURESH KAIT, J. (Oral)

+ **CRL.M.C. 2226/2015**

1. Vide the present petition; petitioners seek directions thereby quashing of FIR No. 199/2005 registered at PS-Connaught Place, New Delhi for the offences punishable under Sections 408/419 /420/467/468/471/120B IPC against the petitioners.

2. The aforesaid case was registered on the complaint made by Regional Manager, Risk Containment Unit, ICICI Bank Ltd as the petitioners cheated the Bank for an amount of Rs.1,01,913/-.

3. Ld. Counsel appearing on behalf of the petitioners submits that petitioners admit their mistake. They were at the pre-mature age at the time of committing the offence. Now, 10 years have

already passed and there is no complaint whatsoever against any of the petitioners. Moreover, the respondent Bank has settled the disputes and does not want to pursue the case further against the petitioners. Therefore, present petition may be allowed.

4. Respondent no. 3 Mr. Paramjeet Singh, Legal Manager of the respondent Bank is present in person and submits that Bank has settled the disputes with the petitioners and the approval in this regard has been received from the competent authority. Thus, the Bank has no objection if the present petition is allowed.

5. On the other hand, Id. APP appearing on behalf of the State submits that aforesaid case was registered on the complaint of respondent / Bank in the year 2005. Though, the respondent Bank has come forward to quash the FIR mentioned above, however, in this process, Govt. machinery came into motion and precious public time of the Court has been consumed. Therefore, if this Court is inclined to quash the FIR mentioned above, heavy cost be imposed upon the petitioners.

6. Under the circumstances and looking to the decision of the Supreme Court in the case of ***Gian Singh Vs. State of Punjab and Another (2012) 10 SCC 303***, wherein the Apex Court has referred to a number of matters for the proposition that even a non-compoundable offence can also be quashed on the ground of a settlement agreement between the offender and the victim, if the circumstances so warrant; by observing as under:

“58.However, certain offences which overwhelmingly and predominantly bear civil flavour having arisen out of civil, mercantile, commercial, financial, partnership or such like transactions or the offences arising out of matrimony, particularly relating to dowry, etc. or the family dispute, where the wrong is basically to the victim and the offender and the victim have settled all disputes between them amicably, irrespective of the fact that such offences have not been made compoundable, the High Court may within the framework of its inherent power, quash the criminal proceeding or criminal complaint or FIR if it is satisfied that on the face of such settlement, there is hardly any likelihood of the offender being convicted and by not quashing the criminal proceedings, justice shall be casualty and ends of justice shall be defeated.”

7. While recognizing the need of amicable resolution of disputes in cases like the instant one, the aforesaid dictum has been affirmed by the Apex Court in a recent judgment in ***Narinder Singh & Ors. Vs. State of Punjab & Anr. 2014 6 SCC 466***. The pertinent observations of the Apex Court are as under:-

29. In view of the aforesaid discussion, we sum up and lay down the following principles by which the High Court would be guided in giving adequate treatment to the settlement between the parties and exercising its power 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:

29.1 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.

29.2. *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.

29.3. *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 the 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.*

29.4. *On the other hand, those criminal cases having overwhelmingly and predominantly 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.

29.5. 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.

29.6. Offences under Section 307 IPC would fall in the category of heinous and serious offences and therefore are 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 latter 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.

29.7. *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 to 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.”

8. Keeping in view the law discussed above and the settlement arrived at between the parties, I hereby quash FIR No. 199/2005 registered at PS-Connaught Place, New Delhi for the offences punishable under Sections 408/419/420/467/468/471/120B IPC with emanating proceedings thereto against the petitioners.

9. Before parting with the instant petition, I find force in the submission of the Id. Additional Public Prosecutor for the State on the issue of imposition of cost. However, petitioners have come forward and agreed to pay some amount for the welfare purposes. Accordingly, petitioner nos. 1, 2 and 3 are directed to pay an amount of Rs.1,00,000/-, Rs.40,000/- and Rs.30,000/- respectively in favour of Prime Minister's National Relief Fund within two weeks from today. Proof of the same shall be placed on record under prior intimation to the IO concerned.

10. Accordingly, the petition is allowed.

Crl. M.A. 7862/2015

Dismissed as infructuous.

SURESH KAIT, J

JULY 31, 2015/jg