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

+ **W.P.(CRL) 2689/2015**

ARIF MOHD KHAN

..... Petitioner

Through

Mr.Madhukar Pandey, Adv. with
Mr.Anirudha Mishra & Mr.Umesh
Kumar, Advs.

versus

THE STATE (NCT OF DELHI) & ANR

.... Respondents

Through

Ms.Nandita Rao, ASC for Ms.Kamna
Vohra, ASC.
SI Pankaj Gulliya PS Jamia Nagar.
Mr.Rishab Raj Jain, Adv. for R2.

CORAM:

HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE ASHUTOSH KUMAR

ORDER

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24.11.2015

Crl.M.A No.17076/2015

Exemption granted subject to all just exceptions.

Application stands disposed of.

W.P.(Crl.)2689/2015

1. The petitioner seeks quashing of FIR No. 354/2015 (PS Jamia Nagar) instituted for offence under Section 135 of the Indian Electricity Act, 2003 and section 379 of the IPC.
2. As per the FIR, a raid by a joint inspection team comprising Delhi Police Officials and officers of Respondent no.2, was conducted at the premises of the petitioner bearing house No. C-175, First Floor, Okhla Vihar New Delhi - 110025. The inspection team found the petitioner to be

indulging in direct theft of electricity and after assessment of the inspection documents, generated an assessment bill of Rs. 96,399/- (Rupees Ninety Six Thousand Three Hundred and Ninety Nine Only) as per rules.

3. It is submitted by the petitioner, that he has already made payment of Rs. 86,760/- (Rupees Eighty Thousand Seven Hundred and Sixty Only) in lieu of the civil liability and has annexed the relevant pay order and receipt to substantiate the same. It is also submitted that in the criminal proceedings pending before the Trial court, the petitioner was granted anticipatory bail on the ground that he had already deposited Rs. 86,760/- out of the total theft bill.

4. Payment of the said amount has not been disputed by the counsel of respondent no.2 company. The learned counsel for respondent no.2 has also conveyed his no-objection for quashing of the FIR.

5. In view of the fact that the petitioner has made substantial payments towards the civil liability, as raised subsequent to the assessment, to the satisfaction of the respondent no.2 company, this Court is of the view that the grievance of the respondent no.2 has been completely redressed, and that no fruitful purpose would be served in further prosecution. On the basis of the aforementioned observations this Court is inclined to quash the present FIR.

6. It is trite to mention that the provision for compounding contained in section 320 of the Cr.P.C., as would be amply evident from its bare perusal, would apply only to the offences punishable under the various sections of the Indian Penal Code, as specified in the said section. Therefore, Section 320 of the Cr.P.C. would have no application with regard to compounding an offence punishable under the Indian Electricity Act. In *Gian Singh vs.*

State of Punjab & Another, (2012) 10 SCC 303, the Supreme Court has held that cases which are not compoundable under Section 320 of the Cr.P.C. could also be quashed, when continuation of any criminal proceeding would be an exercise in futility and where justice demands that the dispute between the parties should be put to an end and peace is restored. But ending of such criminal proceedings could only be ordered for securing the ends of justice.

7. The Supreme Court has further observed in *Gian Singh vs. State of Punjab & Another* (Supra):

“58..... No doubt, crimes are acts which have harmful effect on the public and consist in wrongdoing that seriously endangers and threatens the well-being of the society and it is not safe to leave the crime-doer only because he and the victim have settled the dispute amicably or that the victim has been paid compensation, yet certain crimes have been made compoundable in law, with or without the permission of the court. In respect of serious offences like murder, rape, dacoity, etc., or other offences of mental depravity under IPC or offences of moral turpitude under special statutes, like the Prevention of Corruption Act or the offences committed by public servants while working in that capacity, the settlement between the offender and the victim can have no legal sanction at all. 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. The above list is illustrative and not exhaustive. Each case will depend on its own facts and no hard-and-fast category can be prescribed.” [Refer to B.S. Joshi, (2003) 4 SCC 675; Nikhil Merchant, (2008) 9 SCC 677 and Manoj Sharma, (2008) 16 SCC 1.]

8. 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 chargesheet 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.”

9. Thus, the inherent powers of the High Court, having a wide plenitude could be used for quashing the present FIR in order to secure the ends of justice and to prevent the abuse of the process of the court.
10. The subject FIR (FIR No. 354/2015) (PS Jamia Nagar) and the emanating proceedings thereof are, for the reasons aforesaid, quashed.
11. The petition is disposed of in terms of the aforesaid.

Crl. M.A.17077/2015

1. In view of the petition having been allowed, no orders are required to be passed in the instant application.
2. Dismissed as infructuous.

ASHUTOSH KUMAR, J

NOVEMBER 24, 2015

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