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

+ W.P.(CRL) 116/2017

GAURAV LAMBA & ORS. Petitioners

Through Md. Shariq, Adv.

versus

STATE (NCT OF DELHI) & ANR. Respondents

Through Ms. Kamna Vohra, ASC.

CORAM:

HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE ASHUTOSH KUMAR

ORDER

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25.05.2017

The petitioners have sought quashing of the FIR No.837/2015 dated 25.09.2015 (PS Subhash Place) instituted for the offences under sections 498A/406/34 of the IPC.

Only the petitioner no.1 and respondent no.2 are present in the Court today. It has been submitted on behalf of the other petitioners by the learned counsel appearing for them that they were exempted on the last date from appearing before this Court. The aforesaid contention of the Md. Shariq, advocate has been disputed by the parents of respondent no.2 who are present in the Court.

However, taking into account the fact that the petitioner nos.2 & 3 are staying abroad and petitioner nos.4 & 5 are the sister and brother-in-law of petitioner no.1 and petitioner nos.6 & 7 are the uncle and the aunt of the petitioner no.1, this Court does not insist for their presence.

The petitioner no.1 was married to respondent no.2 in the year 2014 in accordance with Hindu religious rites. After about one year of the marital

life, the spouses started living separately. Thereafter the subject FIR was registered against the petitioners on 25.09.2015.

The dispute between the parties was by and large settled before the mediator who had been instrumental in bringing about rapprochement between the parties. However, some of the issues were still left unresolved. For removal of any such obstacles towards a complete settlement, the petitioners agreed to pay to the respondent no.2 an amount of Rs.50,000/-. The petitioners are today ready with the draft of Rs.50,000/-. Apart from the balance of the settled amount namely Rs.2,25,000/-, both the drafts referred to above viz. DD no.026792 dated 18.04.2017 for the amount of 50,000/- drawn on HDFC Bank Ltd. Paschim Vihar, New Delhi and DD No.268482 dated 05.10.2016 (later revalidated on 17.04.2017) for the amount of Rs.2,25,000/- drawn on Punjab National Bank, Jawala Heri, Paschim Vihar, New Delhi, respectively both in the favour of respondent no.2, have been handed over to respondent no.2 in the presence of her parents and Ms. Kamna Vohra, learned Additional Standing Counsel appearing for the state.

What still remains disputed is the possession of the birth certificate and educational certificates of respondent no.2. It is the contention of the respondent no.2 that the birth certificate was obtained by the petitioner no.1 on the pretext of obtaining visa for her for USA.

Mr. Gaurav Lamba, the petitioner no.1, submits that he is not in possession of the aforesaid certificates and had it been lying with him, there was no use in keeping it back, as it would only delay the quashing of the subject FIR.

Be that as it may, since the respondent no.2 would require her birth certificate in future, that may be obtained by her through the agency of her

father. Whenever such an application would be made by the father of the respondent no.2 or the respondent no.2 herself before the concerned Embassy, it would be taken into account that the document has been misplaced or is untraceable.

The educational certificate of the respondent no.2 also appears to have been misplaced. Those may also be obtained by respondent no.2 by applying before the concerned Board. Apart from the aforesaid issues, there is no other grievance of the respondent no.2 to be redressed.

On the part of the petitioners, it has been submitted that during the pendency of the investigation of the subject FIR, a letter was written at the behest of respondent no.2 to Airport Authority of India for issuing a look-out circular and the same was issued, which is also required to be withdrawn. It has been submitted on behalf of the respondent no.2 that the look-out circular which was issued on the last occasion expires today. The respondent no.2 has undertaken not to request for any further issuance of look-out circular in view of the settlement of all disputes between them.

Likewise, petitioner no.1 has undertaken that whichever complaint he has filed before any authority, he shall withdraw the same and shall not file any fresh complaint unnecessarily against respondent no.2 or her family members in future.

Petitioner no.1 and respondent no.2 now stand divorced by a decree of the competent court.

Taking into account the aforesaid facts, namely the settlement between the parties, the conscious decision of parting ways and divorce of petitioner no.1 and respondent no.2 coupled with the undertaking given by petitioner no.1 and respondent no.2 for performing their respective

obligations, this Court has been persuaded to quash the subject FIR. No useful purpose would be served in keeping the investigation pending or prosecution to be kept alive.

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.

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.]

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.”

In the case of ***Jitendra Raghuvanshi & Ors. Vs. Babita Raghuvanshi & Anr. (2013) 4 SCC 58***, wherein the Supreme Court in respect of the matrimonial disputes has specifically held as follows:-

“15. In our view, it is the duty of the courts to encourage genuine settlements of matrimonial disputes, particularly, when the same are on considerable increase. Even if the offences are non-compoundable, if they relate to matrimonial disputes and the Court is satisfied that the parties have settled the same amicably and without any pressure, we hold that for the purpose of securing ends of justice, Section 320 of the Code would not be a bar to the exercise of power of quashing of FIR, complaint or the subsequent criminal proceedings.

16. There has been an outburst of matrimonial disputes in recent times. The institution of marriage occupies an important place and it has an important role to play in the society. Therefore, every effort should be made in the interest of the individuals in order to enable them to settle down in life and live peacefully. If the parties ponder over their defaults and terminate their disputes amicably by mutual agreement instead of fighting it out in a court of law, in order to do complete justice in the matrimonial matters, the courts should be less hesitant in exercising their extraordinary jurisdiction. It is trite to state that the power under Section 482 should be exercised sparingly and with circumspection only when the Court is

convinced, on the basis of material on record, that allowing the proceedings to continue would be an abuse of process of court or that the ends of justice require that the proceedings ought to be quashed....”

For the aforesaid facts, the FIR No.837/2015 dated 25.09.2015 (PS Subhash Place) instituted for the offences under sections 498A/406/34 of the IPC and all other proceedings emanating therefrom are quashed.

The petition is disposed of in terms of the above.

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ASHUTOSH KUMAR, J

MAY 25, 2017

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