

**230 IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA
AT CHANDIGARH**

CRM-M-3473-2020

Date of Decision: 03.02.2023

Naresh Kumar Sharma and another

..... Petitioners

Versus

State of Punjab and another

.....Respondents

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE RAJESH BHARDWAJ

Present: Mr. R.K. Handa, Advocate, for the petitioners.

Mr. Karunesh Kaushal, Assistant Advocate General, Punjab.

Mr. Ashish Grover, Advocate, for respondent No.2.

Rajesh Bhardwaj, J. (ORAL)

Instant petition has been filed under Section 482 Cr.P.C. praying for quashing of FIR No.31 dated 23.03.2019, registered under Sections 420, 120-B IPC, at Police Station Division-I, District Police Commissionerate, Ludhiana and all the subsequent proceedings arising therefrom.

Status report by way of affidavit of Ramandeep Singh Bhullar, PPS, Assistant Commissioner of Police (Central), Ludhiana filed in Court is taken on record.

It has been contended by learned counsel for the petitioners that the matter was referred to the Mediation Centre and Conciliation Centre of this Court. He submits that the parties have duly appeared before the Mediation Centre and Conciliation Centre of this Court and they have resolved the dispute in question amicably and the petitioners have paid Rs.25 lacs to the complainant.

Learned counsel for respondent No.2-complainant has affirmed

the fact regarding settlement between the parties.

This Court vide order dated 23.11.2022 directed to parties to appear before the Mediation and Conciliation Centre of this Court for settling their dispute amicably.

In pursuance to the same, the Mediator sent his report dated 15.12.2022. As per the report received, the matter has been settled between the parties and written settlement signed by the both the parties and their counsel has also been tagged by the Mediator with his report.

Learned State counsel has submitted that the matter is under investigation, however, from the facts and circumstances of the case and the statement of the learned counsel for the petitioners, it is apparent that both the parties are satisfied as the amount of Rs.25 Lacs involved, has already been paid by the petitioners to the complainant. Both the sides have no objection whatsoever in quashing the FIR.

I have heard learned counsel for the parties and perused the report sent by the Mediator.

In **Narinder Singh's** case (supra) the Hon'ble Supreme Court laid down certain guidelines to be taken into consideration by the High Courts while exercising its power under Section 482 Cr.P.C., the relevant part of which reads as under:-

“31. 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:

(I) to (VI)

(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.”

Thus, keeping in view the law settled in Narinder Singh's case (supra), this Court is inclined to invoke its power under Section 482 Cr.P.C. to meet the ends of justice, wherein it has been held that if the settlement is arrived at immediately after the alleged commission of offence when the matter is still under investigation, the High Court may be somewhat liberal in accepting the settlement and quashing of proceedings/ investigation.

A bare perusal of statutory provision of the 482 Cr.P.C. would show that the High Court may make such orders, as may be necessary to give effect to any order under this Code or to prevent abuse of the process of any Court or otherwise to secure the ends of justice. Section 320 Cr.P.C. is equally relevant for consideration, which prescribes the procedure for compounding of the offences under the Indian Penal Code.

Keeping in view the nature of offences allegedly committed and the fact that both the parties have amicably settled their dispute, the

continuation of criminal prosecution would be a futile exercise. The Hon'ble Supreme Court in a number of cases including **B.S.Joshi and others vs State of Haryana and another (2003) 4 Supreme Court Cases 675** followed by this Court in Full Bench case of **Kulwinder Singh and others Vs. State of Punjab and another, 2007(3) RCR 1052** have dealt with the proposition involved in the present case and settled the law.

Thereafter, Hon'ble Supreme Court in **Gian Singh vs State of Punjab and another** (2012) 10 Supreme Court Cases 303 further dealt with the issue and the earlier law settled by the Supreme Court for quashing of the FIR in **State of Haryana vs Bhajan Lal**, 1992 Supp (1) SCC 335. Para 61 of the judgment reads as under:-

“61. 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 a 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 pre-dominantly civil flavour stand on a 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, the High Court may quash criminal proceedings if in its view, because of the compromise between the offender and the victim, the possibility of conviction is remote and bleak and continuation of the criminal case would put the 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 the 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 the affirmative, the High Court shall be well within its jurisdiction to quash the criminal proceeding.”

Applying the law settled by Hon'ble Supreme Court in plethora of judgments and this High Court it is apparent that when the parties have entered into a compromise, in the nature of cases as prescribed then continuation of the proceedings would be merely an abuse of process of the

Court and by allowing and accepting the prayer of the petitioners by quashing the FIR would be securing the ends of justice, which is primarily the object of the legislature enacting under Section 482 Cr.P.C.

Though the learned State counsel has submitted that the matter is under investigation, however, as the parties have already settled the dispute amicably, this Court finds that the case in hand squarely falls within the ambit and parameters settled by judicial precedents and hence, FIR No.31 dated 23.03.2019, registered under Sections 420, 120-B IPC, at Police Station Division-I, District Police Commissionerate, Ludhiana and all subsequent proceedings arising therefrom are hereby quashed qua the petitioners, on the basis of compromise arrived between the parties before the Mediation and Conciliation Centre of this Court.

Needless to say that the parties shall remain bound by the terms and conditions of the compromise arrived at between them before the Mediation and Conciliation Centre of this Court.

Petition stands allowed.

03.02.2023		(RAJESH BHARDWAJ)
sharmila		JUDGE
	Whether Speaking/Reasoned	: Yes/No
	Whether Reportable	: Yes/No