

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

CRM-M-7049-2023 (O&M)
Date of Decision: 24.03.2023

GAGANDEEP SINGH

....Petitioner

Versus

STATE OF PUNJAB

...Respondent

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE HARSH BUNGER

Present : Mr. Paras Jagga, Advocate
for the petitioner.

Mr. Aditya Kapoor, AAG, Punjab.

HARSH BUNGER, J. (Oral)

Petitioner has filed this petition under Section 482 Cr.P.C. seeking quashing of impugned order dated 29.03.2022 (Annexure P-2), passed by learned Additional Sessions Judge, Ludhiana in case FIR No.0112 dated 27.05.2021, under sections 379-B and 34 of Indian Penal Code, 1860 at Police Station Jamalpur, District Police Commissionerate Ludhiana (Annexure P-1), whereby the bail order of the petitioner has been cancelled, his bail bonds/surety bonds have been cancelled and forfeited to the State and petitioner had been summoned through non-bailable warrants.

Upon issuance of notice in this case a status report by way of affidavit dated 20.03.2023 of Murad Javir Singh Gill, PPS, Assistant Commissioner of Police, Industrial Area-A, Ludhiana was filed on behalf of respondent/State of Punjab.

Learned counsel for the petitioner contends that petitioner was granted bail by the learned trial Court and he attended the trial proceedings regularly. Learned counsel for the petitioner submits that on 29.03.2022, he could not appear before the trial Court as the earlier counsel engaged by the petitioner told him that there is no need of his personal appearance and therefore the petitioner did not appear on 29.03.2022, consequently his bail was cancelled and his bail bonds/surety bonds were also cancelled and forfeited to the State and non-bailable warrants were also ordered to be issued against him by the trial Court. Learned counsel submits that there was no intention on the part of petitioner to delay the proceedings and his absence before the trial court was neither intentional nor deliberate but for the aforesaid reason. Learned counsel further submits that the petitioner is ready and willing to surrender before the trial Court and join the proceedings, if he is granted one opportunity to do so. Learned counsel further submits that the petitioner undertakes to appear on each and every date before the trial court and to abide by all the terms and conditions to be imposed by this Court or by the trial Court.

Learned State counsel opposes the prayer of the petitioner raised in the instant petition by stating that he has jumped the bail and has not followed the conditions of bail, accordingly the petitioner is not entitled to any relief. It is submitted that the petitioner was arrested in another case FIR No.78 dated 21.05.2022 and he was released on 24.08.2022. It is contended that petitioner is a habitual offender, accordingly prayer for dismissal of this petition was made.

I have heard the arguments of learned counsel for the petitioner

as well as learned counsel for the respondent/State and have also perused the paper book, the impugned order as well as the status report.

A perusal of order dated 29.03.2022 (Annexure P-2) reflects that the trial Court proceeded to pass the impugned order on account of absence of petitioner on 29.03.2022 (Annexure P-2). It is observed that at times, the accused or his counsel can be prevented by sufficient reasons to put an appearance before the Court on a given date and every such absence cannot be necessarily construed as a deliberate and willful absence.

This Court vide judgment dated 18.07.2018, passed in **CRM-M-29461-2018**, titled as “**Naveen Rao Vs. Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) ACB, Chandigarh**”, observed as under:

“- x - x -

Keeping in view the conduct of the petitioner as he came back immediately after a period of 20 days, it appears that there was no intention on the part of the petitioner to remain absent. It can be an inadvertent mistake/lapse on his part. Moreover, the petitioner is NRI and ready to abide by all terms and conditions to be imposed by this Court or by the trial Court.

Same issue was there before the Kerala High Court in Mahesh vs. State of Kerala, 2011 (1) Cri.C.C. 834 wherein the condition of bail was violated and due to absence of the accused-petitioner, bail was cancelled. The relevant portion of said judgment is reproduced as under: -

“20. To cancel the bail under section 437(5) or 439(2) of the Code very cogent and overwhelming reasons are also to be stated. The Court shall not cancel bail in a routine manner, under section 437(5) or 439(2) of the Code, as per law. This is the settled position of law. But, the position under Section 446-A of the Code is

totally different. If the Magistrate Court is satisfied that there is breach of condition of bail bond and thereby, forfeiture of the bond, the bond automatically stands cancelled under Section 446-A of the Code.

*21. However, a mere violation of condition in the bail order will not lead to automatic cancellation of bail bond under Section 446-A of the Code. Apart from violation of condition in the bail order, the Court must also be satisfied that the bond is forfeited then alone, bail bond would stand cancelled and the accused can be proceeded against. It is the forfeiture of the bail bond which is crucial under Section 446-A of the Code. If the breach of condition is not wilful and is due to reasons beyond his control, it cannot be said that there is forfeiture of bond. The question is dealt with in **Rajan v. State of Kerala, 2006 (4) KLT 429** and it is held thus:*

"A bond for appearance can be said to be forfeited, only if there is a wilful default on the part of the accused in not appearing before the Court. It is needless to say that an accused can be absent in Court due to various reasons on a particular occasion. When the counsel files an application, it follows that the accused was vigilant and he had taken steps to instruct his counsel to file an application. Such an accused cannot be said to have forfeited the bond by reason of any wilful default. It is only in cases where there is wilful default on the part of the accused to appear in Court, forfeiture of bond will follow and penalty will incur."

*22. In **State of Kerala v. Anil Kumar, 2005 (4) KLT SN 59**, referring to cancellation of bail, this Court held thus: "an innocent violation of any condition imposed*

by the Court will not ipso facto lead to cancellation of bail under section 439(2) Criminal Procedure Code. The crucial and vital question is whether there has been deliberate, contumacious and unjustified infraction of the conditions imposed by the Court". It is needless to say that if the Court cannot cancel bail, if violation of condition is not wilful or deliberate, it is only reasonable to hold that such violation (which is not wilful or intentional) shall also not lead to an automatic cancellation of bail bond under Section 446-A of the Code."

In the present case also, the bail/surety bonds have been cancelled as the petitioner left India without prior permission of the Court. An application for exemption from personal appearance was also moved, which was dismissed. The petitioner is NRI and he went abroad without seeking any permission from the Court, which has been stated to be inadvertent as he did not go through the terms and conditions of bail but the circumstances were beyond his control. The petitioner immediately came back to India and came to know that his bail bonds have been cancelled. There was no intention on his part to remain absent or to avoid the Court proceedings. The petitioner remained ill when he was abroad, remained there for a period of 20 days and could not come back immediately.

Accordingly, the present petition is allowed and the petitioner is directed to surrender before the trial Court on the next date of hearing i.e., 19.07.2018 by furnishing an undertaking before the trial Court that he will attend the Court proceedings regularly and will not leave the country without prior permission of the Court and abide by all terms and conditions to be imposed by the trial Court. He is directed to be released by the trial Court by furnishing adequate surety/bail bonds to its satisfaction subject to

payment of cost of `25000/- to be deposited with the trial Court.

- x - x -”

In the present case also, the bail of the petitioner was cancelled and his bail bonds/surety bonds were forfeited to the State and non-bailable warrants have been ordered to be issued against him as he did not appear on the date fixed i.e. 29.03.2022, before the trial Court for which he has given the reason that earlier counsel engaged by the petitioner told him that there is no need of his personal appearance and therefore the petitioner did not appear on 29.03.2022.

Keeping in view the above-mentioned facts and circumstances and also considering the submission of the petitioner that there was no intention on his part to remain absent, this Court is inclined to afford one opportunity to the petitioner to mend his ways. Moreover, joining of proceedings by the petitioner, would ensure finalization of proceedings.

In view of the above, the present petition is disposed of with a direction to the petitioner to surrender before the trial Court on or before 17.04.2023 by furnishing an undertaking before the trial Court that he will attend the Court proceedings regularly and will not leave the country without prior permission of the Court and abide by all terms and conditions to be imposed by the trial Court. In case, the petitioner surrenders before the trial Court then he be released by the trial Court upon his furnishing fresh surety bonds/bail bonds to its satisfaction subject to payment of cost of Rs. 10,000/- to be deposited in the concerned District Legal Services Authority.

However, the concerned Station House Officer shall be informed about the release of petitioner and the petitioner shall inform the

concerned Station House Officer about his address at which he intends to reside during the pendency of case and any change in the address shall also be communicated to the concerned Station House Officer, forthwith. The petitioner would also furnish his telephone number to the concerned Station House Officer.

Disposed of in the above-said terms.

24.03.2023

Amandeep

(HARSH BUNGER)

JUDGE

Whether speaking/reasoned:

Yes/No

Whether reportable:

Yes/No