

267

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB & HARYANA
AT CHANDIGARH**

**CRM-M-52384-2022
Date of Decision: 16.03.2023**

Lovepreet @ Lovejot Singh and others

..... Petitioners

Versus

State of Punjab and another

..... Respondents

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE HARSH BUNGER

Present: Mr. Amritpal Singh Gill, Advocate
for the petitioners.

Mr. Harjinder Singh Sidhu, AAG, Punjab
for respondent No.1/State.

Mr. Davinderbir Singh, Advocate
for respondent No.2.

HARSH BUNGER J. (ORAL)

Present petition under Section 482 of the Code of Criminal Procedure is filed for quashing of FIR No.122 dated 21.08.2022 (Annexure P-1), under Sections 323, 324 read with Section 34 of the Indian Penal Code (Section 326 of the Indian Penal Code, added later on), registered at Police Station Kabarwala, District Sri Muktsar Sahib, along with all consequential proceedings arising therefrom, on the basis of Compromise Deed dated 31.10.2022 (Annexure P-2).

Vide order dated 25.01.2023, passed by this Court, the trial Court/Illaq Magistrate was directed to record the statements of parties with regard to the compromise.

In compliance thereof, the Judicial Magistrate Ist Class, Malout, District Sri Muktsar Sahib, vide letter dated 14.02.2023, has submitted a consolidated report, which indicates that the parties appeared before the Magistrate and got recorded their respective statements with regard to the validity of compromise. As per the report, the compromise arrived at between the parties is genuine and with free will and consent. Relevant extract of the said report is reproduced as under:

“ - x - x - x -

2. *In compliance with aforesaid order, parties have come present. Statement of complainant namely Harmander Singh recorded in which he has stated that the present FIR has been registered on the basis of his statement. He has further stated that he has entered into compromise in this matter with the accused persons namely Lovepreet Singh, Ramandeep Singh and Sukhjant Singh with the intervention of village Panchayat. He has further stated that the matter has been amicably sorted out between him and the accused person. He has no grudge with the accused person. He has further stated that the compromise has been arrived at voluntarily without any pressure, coercion with the other party and with his own sweet will. He has further stated that total three accused involved in this present case and no one is absconding/PO. He has further stated that the challan has not been presented in the present case so far. He has further stated that he is only one victim in the present case. He has further stated that he has signed the compromise deed. He has further stated that he does not want to proceed with the present FIR and he has no objection if the present FIR and other proceedings are quashed against the accused persons.*

3. *The statement of accused person namely Lovepreet*

Singh, Ramandeep Singh and Sukhjant Singh have also been recorded in which they have stated that the present FIR has been registered on the basis of the statement of the complainant Harmander Singh against them. They have further stated that they have arrived at a compromise in this matter with the complainant with the intervention of the village Panchayat. They have further stated that the matter has been amicably sorted out between them and the complainant. They have further stated that they have no grudge with the complainant. They have further stated that the compromise is voluntarily, without any pressure, coercion, with the other party and with their own sweet Will. They have further stated that only three persons arrayed in the present case and no one is absconding/PO. They have further stated that there is no other criminal case is pending against them except the above said FIR. They have further stated that challan has not been presented in the present case so far. They have further stated that complainant is only one victim in the present case. They have further stated that they all signed the compromise deed.

4. In order to prove their identity, both the parties have placed on file their identity proof. Both parties are identified by Inderjeet Singh Member Panchayat of village Dabwali Dhab. This court is satisfied that aforesaid statements made by the parties are voluntarily and their compromise has been arrived at genuine, voluntarily, threat, without any coercion or undue influence from either side. Both the parties have signed the compromise deed. Challan has not been presented in the present case so far. It is further mentioned that ASI Baljinder Singh (Investigating Officer of the present case) suffered a statement that as per record there is only victim/complainant namely

Harmander Singh and three accused persons namely Lovepreet Singh, Ramandeep Singh and Sukhjant Singh arrayed in the present FIR case and no one is absconding/PO. He has further stated that there is no other criminal case is pending except the above said FIR against the accused person. He further stated that challan has not been presented in the present case so far.

- x - x - x - ”

A perusal of the said report would show that statements of the concerned persons have been recorded in the present case, who have stated that the matter has been compromised and they have no objection in case FIR in question is quashed.

Learned State counsel does not raise any serious dispute regarding quashing of FIR in question.

Learned counsel for respondent No.2 has again reiterated that the matter has been settled and the said compromise is in the interest of all the persons and would help in bringing out peace and amity between the parties.

I have heard learned counsel for the parties and perused the files.

In ***Shakuntala Sawhney v. Kaushalya Sawhney, (1979) 3 SCR 639, at P 642***, Hon'ble Supreme Court observed that the finest hour of Justice arises propitiously when parties, who fell apart, bury the hatchet and weave a sense of fellowship or reunion.

Hon'ble Apex Court in the case of ***Gian Singh Versus State of Punjab and another. 2012(4) RCR (Criminal) 543*** has held as under:-

“57. 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 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 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 personnel in nature and the parties have resolved their entire dispute. In this category of cases, High Court may quash criminal proceedings if in its view, because of the compromise between the offender and victim, the possibility of conviction is remote and bleak and continuation of criminal case would put 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 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 affirmative, the High Court shall be well within its jurisdiction to quash the criminal proceeding.”

Still further, the broad principles for exercising the powers under Section 482 were summarized by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in the matter of **'Parbatbhai Aahir @ Parbatbhai Bhimsinhbhai Karmur and others versus State of Gujarat and another'** (2017) 9 SCC 641', the same are extracted as under:

“16. The broad principles which emerge from the precedents on the subject, may be summarised in the following propositions:

16.1 Section 482 preserves the inherent powers of the High Court to prevent an abuse of the process of any court or to secure the ends of justice. The provision does not confer new powers. It only recognises and preserves powers which inhere in the High Court;

16.2 The invocation of the jurisdiction of the High Court to quash a First Information Report or a criminal proceeding on the ground that a settlement has been arrived at between the offender and the victim is not the same as the invocation of jurisdiction for the purpose of compounding an offence. While compounding an offence, the power of the court is governed by the provisions of Section 320 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973. The power to quash under Section 482 is attracted even if the offence is non-compoundable.

16.3 In forming an opinion whether a criminal proceeding or complaint should be quashed in exercise of its jurisdiction under Section 482, the High Court must evaluate whether the ends of justice would justify the exercise of the inherent power;

16.4 While the inherent power of the High Court has a wide ambit and plenitude it has to be exercised; (i) to secure the ends of justice or (ii) to prevent an abuse of the process of any court;

16.5 The decision as to whether a complaint or First Information Report should be quashed on the ground that the offender and victim have settled the dispute, revolves ultimately on the facts and circumstances of each case and no exhaustive elaboration of principles can be formulated;

16.6 In the exercise of the power under Section 482 and while dealing with a plea that the dispute has been settled, the High Court must have due regard to the nature and gravity of the offence. Heinous and serious offences involving mental depravity or offences such as murder, rape and dacoity cannot appropriately be quashed though the victim or the family of the victim have settled the dispute. Such offences are, truly speaking, not private in nature but have a serious impact upon society. The decision to continue with the trial in such cases is founded on the overriding element of public interest in punishing persons for serious offences;

16.7 As distinguished from serious offences, there may be criminal cases which have an overwhelming or predominant element of a civil dispute. They stand on a distinct footing in so far as the exercise of the inherent power to quash is concerned;

16.8 Criminal cases involving offences which arise from commercial, financial, mercantile, partnership or similar transactions with an essentially civil flavour may in appropriate situations fall for quashing where parties have settled the dispute;

16.9 In such a case, the High Court may quash the criminal

proceeding if in view of the compromise between the disputants, the possibility of a conviction is remote and the continuation of a criminal proceeding would cause oppression and prejudice; and

16.10 There is yet an exception to the principle set out in propositions 16.8 and 16.9 above. Economic offences involving the financial and economic well-being of the state have implications which lie beyond the domain of a mere dispute between private disputants. The High Court would be justified in declining to quash where the offender is involved in an activity akin to a financial or economic fraud or misdemeanour. The consequences of the act complained of upon the financial or economic system will weigh in the balance.”

In the matter of '**Ramgopal And Another Vs State of Madhya Pradesh, 2021 SCC Online SC 834**', the Hon'ble Supreme Court has held that the matters which can be categorized as personal in nature or in the matter in which the nature of injuries do not exhibit mental depravity or commission of an offence of such a serious nature that quashing of which would override public interest, the Court can quash the FIR in view of the settlement arrived at amongst the parties. The observation of the Hon'ble Supreme Court is extracted as under:-

“19. We thus sum-up and hold that as opposed to Section 320 Cr.P.C. where the Court is squarely guided by the compromise between the parties in respect of offences ‘compoundable’ within the statutory framework, the extra-ordinary power enjoined upon a High Court under Section 482 Cr.P.C. or vested in this Court under Article 142 of the Constitution, can be invoked beyond the metes and bounds of Section 320 Cr.P.C. Nonetheless, we reiterate that such powers of wide amplitude ought to be exercised carefully in the context of quashing criminal proceedings, bearing in mind: (i) Nature

and effect of the offence on the conscious of the society; (ii) Seriousness of the injury, if any; (iii) Voluntary nature of compromise between the accused and the victim; & (iv) Conduct of the accused persons, prior to and after the occurrence of the purported offence and/or other relevant considerations...”

Having appraised the aforestated parameters and weighing upon the peculiar facts and circumstances of the instant case, this Court is inclined to invoke powers under Section 482 Cr.P.C. to quash the criminal proceedings for the following reasons:

- i. The alleged occurrence *prima facie* appears to be a result of some misunderstanding between the parties, wherein the complainant is alleged to have suffered injuries on his left hand, arm and back.
- ii. The petitioners do not suffer any criminal antecedents and are not involved in any other case.
- iii. The FIR in this case was registered on 21.08.2022 whereas compromise was effected on 31.10.2022 and there is nothing on record to show that either before or after the purported compromise, any untoward incident transpired between the parties.
- iv. The parties on their own volition, without any coercion or compulsion, willingly and voluntarily have buried their differences and wish to accord a quietus to their dispute.
- v. The complainant is not likely to support the case of the prosecution and continuation of the proceedings is likely to be a waste of judicial time.

- vi. The object of law is well served when the parties resolve their differences and chose to peacefully co-exist and live in harmony.
- vii. The grievances having been resolved, no interest of justice would be served by forcing the petitioners to undergo rigours of criminal proceedings.
- viii. Since petitioners and complainant are residents of the same area/town, the quashing of criminal proceedings will advance peace, harmony, and fellowship amongst the parties who have decided to forget and forgive any ill-will and have no vengeance against each other; and continuation of the proceedings is not likely to advance any interest of justice.
- ix. The cause of administration of criminal justice system would remain unaffected on acceptance of the amicable settlement between the parties and/or resultant acquittal of the petitioners.

For the reasons stated above, the present petition is allowed and the criminal proceedings in the aforesaid FIR No.122 dated 21.08.2022 (Annexure P-1), under Sections 323, 324 read with Section 34 of the Indian Penal Code (Section 326 of the Indian Penal Code, added later on), registered at Police Station Kabarwala, District Sri Muktsar Sahib are quashed on the basis of compromise (Annexure P-2) entered into between the parties. However, the same would be subject to payment of costs of Rs.10,000/- to be deposited by the petitioners with the **“Poor Patients' Welfare Fund, PGIMER, Chandigarh”** and the said amount would be

spent for the treatment of poor patients within the knowledge of its Medical Superintendent.

Disposed of in the aforesaid terms.

All pending application(s), if any, shall stand disposed of.

16.03.2023

Apurva

(HARSH BUNGER)

JUDGE

1. Whether speaking/reasoned : Yes/No

2. Whether reportable : Yes/No