

IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA AT CHANDIGARH

CRM-M-54107-2022

DATE OF DECISION: APRIL 24, 2023

HARPREET SINGH BAJWA

...PETITIONER

VERSUS

STATE OF PUNJAB AND OTHERS

...RESPONDENTS

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE DEEPAK MANCHANDA.

PRESENT: MR. A.S. BARWALA, ADVOCATE
FOR THE PETITIONER.

MR. MADHUR SHARMA, AAG, PUNJAB.

MS. NEELAM CHAUDHARY, ADVOCATE
FOR MR. A.S. BHATTI, ADVOCATE
FOR RESPONDENTS NO.2 AND 3.

DEEPAK MANCHANDA, J.(ORAL)

This petition has been filed under Section 482 Cr.P.C. praying for the quashing of FIR No.458 dated 16.10.2022, under Section 279, 337, 338, 427 IPC, Police Station City Barnala, District Barnala and all the subsequent proceedings emanating therefrom on the basis of compromise dated 2.11.2022 (Annexure P-2).

As per the allegations levelled in the FIR, on 11.10.2022, when complainant Harbans Singh alongwith Baljit Singh went to Dhanola Khurd on his motorcycle No.PB-19-E-8675 (Hero Deluxe Black) for repair or bore, near Inderlok Colony, just opposite to the gate of Kande Wala, car driven in a high speed hit them, on which they fell down and received fractures. Thereafter, he was informed by the Sapranch of his village that the said car bearing registration No.PB-19-T-9979 was being driven by the son

of Karamjit Singh MC who gave them Rs.40,000/- and told that they will bear all the expenses with regard to treatment, but never turned up again.

Ms. Neelam Chaudhary, Advocate has put in appearance on behalf Mr. A.S. Bhatti, Advocate for of respondent No.2-complainant as well as respondent No.3 and admitted the factum of compromise. On 21.11.2022, this Court after issuance of Notice of motion had directed the private parties to appear before the Illaqa Magistrate/trial Court (as the case may be) to get recorded their statements and trial court would satisfy itself about the authenticity of the compromise and the fact that it has been arrived at without any kind of undue influence or pressure, and would thereafter send its report to this Court, before the next date of hearing.

In pursuance of the said order, the report forwarded vide letter No.66 dated 7.1.2023 has been submitted by the Chief Judicial Magistrate Barnala, which is on record. The relevant part of the report is reproduced hereinbelow:-

“Gurdev Singh appeared in the Court on 6.12.2022 and complainant/injured Harbans Singh son of Tehal Singh appeared in the court on 2.1.2023 and the accused namely, Harpreet Singh Bajwa son of Karamjit Singh Bajwa appeared in the court on 6.12.2022 and got recorded their statements to the effect that they have compromised the matter with the intervention of respectables without any pressure or coercion and have no objection if present FIR is quashed. It is further submitted that on 4.1.2023 ASI Darshan Singh, Investigating Officer has appeared in the Court and made statement that the present case has been registered on the complainant Harbans Singh son of Tehal Singh against the accused

Harpreet Singh Bajwa son of Karamjit Singh Bajwa. It is further submitted that the said accused Harpreet Singh Bajwa son of Karamjit Singh Bajwa is not proclaimed offender in this case and no proclamation proceedings are pending against him. It is further submitted that accused Harpreet Singh Bajwa is involved in another FIR No.591 dated 10.12.2021 under Section 307, 458, 323, 341, 325, 506, 148, 149 IPC and Section 25 of Arms Act, PS City-II, Barnala in which accused has joined the investigation on 5.1.2022. It is further submitted that only one accused is arraigned as accused namely, Harpreet Singh Bajwa son of Karamjit Singh Bajwa. It is further submitted that the complainant/injured namely Harbans Singh son of Tehal Singh and the other injured namely Baljit Singh son of Gurdev Singh are there in the FIR.

This Court, after hearing the parties in person and after going through the statements recorded in the court, is of the opinion that the compromise effected between the parties is genuine, voluntary and without any coercion or undue influence and statements recorded by the complainant party as well as accused person are not the result of any pressure or coercion.”

In compliance with the order dated 21.11.2022, an affidavit dated 10.1.2023, has been filed by respondent No.1, i.e. State, wherein it is mentioned that investigation is complete, however, the challan is yet to be presented.

A perusal of the said report would show that statements of the concerned persons have been recorded in this case, who have stated that the matter has been compromised and complainant/respondent No.2 as well as respondent No.3 has no objection in case the FIR in question is quashed.

They have further stated that the said compromise is genuine, voluntary, and without any coercion or undue influence.

Learned counsel for the petitioners has submitted that the petitioner is involved in one more FIR and has not been declared as proclaimed offender and learned State counsel has not disputed this fact.

Having heard learned counsel for the parties and after perusing the report submitted by the trial Court, this Court finds that the matter has been amicably settled between the petitioners and the complainant, where the case is at the stage of filing of challan, and by the passage of time, the parties have decided to bury their hatchet and compromise the dispute amicably. Therefore to prevent the abuse of the process of law and to secure the ends of justice, the criminal proceedings deserves to be quashed under Section 482 of Cr.P.C., which has the magnitude of the inherent jurisdiction of the High Court under it and this Court has the inherent power under Section 482 of Cr.P.C. to quash an F.I.R. even when the offences are non-compoundable, with the driving force being the object of securing ends of justice.

As per the Full Bench judgment of this Court in **Kulwinder Singh and others Vs State of Punjab, 2007 (3) RCR (Criminal) 1052**, it is held that:-

“27. The power to do complete justice is the very essence of every judicial justice dispensation system. It cannot be diluted by distorted perceptions and is not a slave to anything, except to the caution and circumspection, the standards of which the Court sets before it, in the exercise of such plenary and unfettered

power inherently vested in it while donning the cloak of compassion to achieve the ends of justice. No embargo, be it in the shape of Section 320(9) of the Criminal Procedure Code, or any other such curtailment, can whittle down the power under Section 482 of the Criminal Procedure Code.

28. *The compromise, in modern society, is the sine qua non of harmony and orderly behavior. It is the soul of justice and if the power under Section 482 of the Criminal Procedure Code is used to enhance such a compromise which, in turn, enhances social amity and reduces friction, then it truly is the "finest hour of justice". Disputes which have their genesis in a matrimonial discord, landlord-tenant matters, commercial transactions, and other such matters can safely be dealt with by the Court by exercising its powers under Section 482 of the Criminal Procedure Code in the event of a compromise, but this is not to say that the power is limited to such cases. There can never be any such rigid rule to prescribe the exercise of such power, especially in the absence of any premonitions to forecast and predict eventualities which the cause of justice may throw up during the course of a litigation.*

29. *The only inevitable conclusion from the above discussion is that there is no statutory bar under the Criminal Procedure Code which can affect the inherent power of this Court under Section 482. Further, the same cannot be limited to matrimonial cases alone and the Court has the wide power to quash the proceedings even in non-compoundable offences notwithstanding the bar under Section 320 of the Criminal Procedure Code, in order to prevent the abuse of law and to secure the ends of justice.*

30. *The power under Section 482 of the Criminal Procedure Code is to be exercised Ex-Debitia Justitia to prevent abuse of the process of Court. There can neither be an exhaustive list nor the defined parameters to enable a High Court to invoke or exercise its inherent powers. It will always depend upon the facts and circumstances of each case. The power under Section 482 of the Criminal Procedure Code has no limits and the Court is a vital and extraordinary effective instrument to maintain and control social order and play a role of paramount importance in achieving peace, harmony, and ever-lasting congeniality in society. Resolution of a dispute by way of a compromise between two warring groups, therefore, should attract the immediate and prompt attention of a Court which should endeavor to give full effect to the same unless a such compromise is abhorrent to the lawful composition of the society or would promote savagery.”*

Hon'ble the Apex Court in the case of **Gian Singh Vs. State of Punjab and another, 2012 (4) RCR (Criminal) 543**, had also observed:-

“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 exercising of such power, the High Court must have due regard to the nature and gravity of the crime. Heinous and serious offenses 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-dominatingly 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 personal 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.”

The aforesaid quoted percept has also been followed in **State of Madhya Pradesh v/s Lakshmi Narayan, (2019)5 SCC 688:-**

“29. xxxxxxxx

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.

xxxxxxxxxx”

The view taken by this Court also finds support from the recent judgment of the Hon’ble Supreme Court in **Ram Gopal & Anr. V/s State of Madhya Pradesh, 2021(4) RCR (Criminal) 322**, relevant of which is as under:-

“19. We thus sum-up and hold that as opposed to Section 320 Cr.P.C., 1973 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., 1973 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., 1973 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."

In view of the report of Chief Judicial Magistrate, Barnala, the compromise dated 2.11.2022 (Annexure P-2) and the principles laid down in conspectus of aforesaid judicial precedents, no useful purpose would be served by continuing the proceedings. Therefore, this petition is allowed and FIR No.458 dated 16.10.2022, under Section 279, 337, 338, 427 IPC, Police Station City Barnala, District Barnala and all the subsequent proceedings emanating therefrom ***are hereby quashed***, qua the petitioner.

April 24, 2023
Gulati

(DEEPAK MANCHANDA)
JUDGE

Whether Reportable : Yes/No

Whether Speaking/Reasoned : Yes/No