

**IN THE HIGH COURT FOR THE STATES OF PUNJAB AND
HARYANA AT CHANDIGARH**

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**CRM-M-1624-2024 (O&M)
Date of decision: 16.01.2024**

Amanpreet Singh**...Petitioner****Versus****State of Punjab and another****...Respondents****CORAM: HON'BLE MRS. JUSTICE MANISHA BATRA**

Present:- Mr. Angad Parmar, Advocate for
Mr. Vivek K. Thakur, Advocate
for the petitioner.

MANISHA BATRA, J. (Oral)

1. The instant petition has been filed by the petitioner under Section 482 Cr.P.C. seeking quashing of FIR No. 73 dated 03.07.2020, registered under Sections 341, 323, 149 and 354 (added later on) of the IPC at Police Station Begowal, District Kapurthala along with all the subsequent proceedings arising therefrom including order dated 19.05.2022 (Annexure P-6), whereby the Sub-Divisional Judicial Magistrate has declared him a 'proclaimed absconder'.

2. Brief facts of the case relevant for the purpose of disposal of the present petition are that the aforementioned FIR was registered on the statement recorded by complainant 'K' (*name withheld*) alleging therein that on 02.07.2020, she, being Sarpanch of the village, along with her husband and some other persons was on inspection of the development works in the village and her husband was giving interview to a journalist. In the meantime, petitioner (who is named as Bobby in the FIR) along with others came and wrongfully restrained them. A quarrel took place amongst them, in which, the

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complainant, her husband and other persons accompanying them were extended beatings by the accused persons. During the quarrel, the accused persons also outraged the modesty of the complainant. After registration of the FIR, investigation proceedings were initiated. After completion of investigation, *challan* under Section 173 Cr.P.C. was presented in the Court and now the trial is going on. However, the presence of the petitioner could not be secured. Ultimately, proceedings under Section 82 Cr.P.C. were initiated against the petitioner and he was declared a proclaimed absconder, vide order dated 19.05.2022.

3. At the very outset, learned counsel for the petitioner has limited his prayer to the quashing of order dated 19.05.2022, whereby the petitioner had been declared a proclaimed absconder. It is argued that before declaring him as a proclaimed absconder, the proper procedure as laid down in Section 82 Cr.P.C. had not been followed by the trial Court. It had not accorded the mandatory period of 30 days to the petitioner to cause his appearance in the Court. The petitioner was abroad at the relevant time and no efforts were made by the trial Court to serve him at his ordinary place of residence in Canada. With these broad submissions, learned counsel for the petitioner has argued that the impugned order, declaring the petitioner a proclaimed absconder, is liable to be set aside.

4. I have heard learned counsel for the petitioner at length and have minutely scrutinized the record and on an overall perusal of the orders passed by the trial Court from the date of initiating proceedings under Section 82 Cr.P.C. as against the petitioner till the date of declaring him a proclaimed absconder, I am of the considered opinion that the impugned order dated

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19.05.2022 suffers from material illegalities and is liable to be quashed with all the consequential proceedings arising therefrom.

5. Before delving on the aforementioned points, it would be relevant to firstly refer to the provision of Section 82 Cr.P.C., which provides for publication of proclamation against the person absconding. It reads as under:

“82. Proclamation for person absconding. –

*(1) If any Court has reason to believe (whether after taking evidence or not) that any person against whom a warrant has been issued by it has absconded or is concealing himself so that such warrant cannot be executed, such Court may publish a written proclamation **requiring him to appear at a specified place and at a specified time not less than thirty days from the date of publishing such proclamation.***

(2) The proclamation shall be published as follows:-

(i) (a) it shall be publicly read in some conspicuous place of the town or village in which such person ordinarily resides;

(b) it shall be affixed to some conspicuous part of the house or homestead in which such person ordinarily resides or to some conspicuous place of such town or village;

(c) a copy thereof shall be affixed to some conspicuous part of the Court-house;

(ii) the Court may also, if it thinks fit, direct a copy of the proclamation to be published in a daily newspaper circulating in the place in which such person ordinarily resides.

(3) A statement in writing by the Court issuing the proclamation to the effect that the proclamation was duly published on a specified day, in the manner specified in clause (i) of sub-section (2), shall be conclusive evidence that the requirements of this section have been complied with, and that the proclamation was published on such day.

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(4) Where a proclamation published under sub-section (1) is in respect of a person accused of an offence punishable under section 302, 304, 364, 367, 382, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 402, 436, 449, 459 or 460 of the Indian Penal Code (45 of 1860), and such person fails to appear at the specified place and time required by the proclamation, the Court may, after making such inquiry as it thinks fit, pronounce him a proclaimed offender and make a declaration to that effect.

(5) The provisions of sub-sections (2) and (3) shall apply to a declaration made by the Court under sub-section (4) as they apply to the proclamation published under subsection (1)."

6. There are catena of judgments of different High Courts discussing the requirements necessary for issuance and publication of proclamation against an absconder under Section 82 Cr.P.C. and for declaring him as a proclaimed person/offender. These requirements have been discussed from time to time in ***Rohit Kumar Vs. State of Delhi : 2008 CrL J. 2561, Rohit Kumar Vs. State of Delhi : 2008 CrL J. 2561, Bishundayal Mahton and others Vs. Emperor : AIR 1943 Patna 366, Devender Singh Negi Vs. State of U.P. : 1994 CrL LJ (Allahabad HC) 1783, Gurappa Gugal and others Vs. State of Mysore : 1969 CriLJ 826, Shokat Ali Vs. State of Haryana : 2020(2) RCR (Criminal) 339, Dilbagh Singh Vs. State of Punjab : (P&H) 2015 (8) R.C.R. (criminal) 166, Ashok Kumar Vs. State of Haryana and another : 2013 (4) RCR (Criminal) 550, Pawan Kumar Gupta Vs. The State of W.B. : 1973 CriLJ 1368, Birad Dan Vs. State : 1958 CriLJ 965, Birad Dan Vs. State : 1958 CriLJ 965, Negi alias Debu Vs. State of U.P. and another, 1994 Cri LJ 1783 and Pal Singh Vs. The State : 1955 CriLJ 318.***

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7. The position of law as laid down in the above cited authorities may be summarized as under:

- (i) Prior issuance of warrant of arrest by the Court is sine qua non for issuance and publication of the proclamation and the Court has to first issue warrant of arrest against the person concerned.
- (ii) There must be a report before the Court that the person against whom warrant was issued had absconded or had been concealing himself so that the warrant of arrest could not be executed against him. However, the Court is not bound to take evidence in this regard before issuing a Proclamation under Section 82 (1) of the Cr.P.C.
- (iii) The Court cannot issue the Proclamation as a matter of course because the Police is asking for it. The Court must be prima facie satisfied that the person has absconded or is concealing himself so that the warrant of arrest, previously issued, cannot be executed, despite reasonable diligence.
- (iv) The requisite date and place for appearance must be specified in the proclamation requiring such person to appear on such date at the specified place. Such date must not be less than 30 clear days from the date of issuance and publication of the proclamation.
- (v) Where the period between issuance and publication of the proclamation and the specified date of hearing is less than thirty days, the accused cannot be declared a proclaimed person/offender and the proclamation has to be issued and published again.
- (vi) The Proclamation has to be published in the manner laid down in Section 82 (2) of the Cr.P.C.. For publication, the proclamation has to be first publicly read in some conspicuous place of the town or village in which the accused ordinarily resides; then the same has to be affixed to some conspicuous part of the house or homestead in which the accused ordinarily resides or to some conspicuous place of such town or village and thereafter a copy of the proclamation has to be affixed to

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some conspicuous part of the Court-house. The three sub-clauses (a)- (c) in Section 82 (2)(i) of the Cr.P.C. are conjunctive and not disjunctive, which means that there would be no valid publication of the proclamation unless all the three modes of publication are proved. Where the Court so orders a copy of the proclamation has to be additionally published in a daily newspaper circulating in the place in which the accused ordinarily resides. Advisably, proclamation has to be issued with four copies so that one each of the three copies of the proclamation may be affixed to some conspicuous part of the house or homestead in which the accused ordinarily resides, to some conspicuous place of such town or village and to some conspicuous part of the Courthouse and report regarding publication may be made on the fourth copy of the proclamation. Additional copy will be required where the proclamation is also required to be published in the newspaper.

(vii) Statement of the serving officer has to be recorded by the Court as to the date and mode of publication of the proclamation.

(viii) The Court issuing the proclamation has to make a statement in writing in its order that the proclamation was duly published on a specified day in a manner specified in Section 82(2)(i) of the Cr.P.C.. Such statement in writing by the Court is declared to be conclusive evidence that the requirements of Section 82 have been complied with and that the proclamation was published on such day.

(xi) The conditions specified in Section 82(2) of the Cr.P.C. for the publication of a Proclamation against an absconder are mandatory. Any non-compliance therewith cannot be cured as an 'irregularity' and renders the Proclamation and proceedings subsequent thereto, a nullity.

8. On applying the above discussed position of law to the peculiar facts and circumstances of the present case, it is noticed that vide order dated 15.02.2022, the proclamation was ordered to be issued against the petitioner

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for 21.04.2022 as his presence could not be secured throughailable warrants. Since the proclamation process was received back executed on 21.04.2022, the matter was then adjourned to 19.05.2022 and a notice to serving police official was also issued for the said date. Thereafter, on 19.05.2022, the trial Court, on the basis of the statement of the serving police official, observed that the proclamation was executed on 30.03.2022 and since a period of 30 days from the date of issuance of proclamation i.e. 15.02.2022 had already elapsed and the petitioner had failed to cause his appearance, it declared the petitioner a proclaimed absconder. Admittedly, the publication was effected/executed on 30.03.2022 for 21.04.2022, which shows that after the publication of the notice, the accused was not given the mandatory period of 30 days to the petitioner to cause his appearance in the Court. The Magistrate, while passing the impugned order, had failed to consider the fact that it could not extend the time by simply adjourning the case for awaiting the appearance of the petitioner and was mandatorily required to issue fresh proclamation again for publication thereon in accordance with provisions of Section 82(1) Cr.P.C. More so, there is nothing on record to show that the trial Court had made any efforts or had passed any order for serving the petitioner at his place of residence abroad, which was in its due notice. No attempt was made to serve the petitioner through Ministry of External Affairs at Italy. Therefore, the satisfaction, as recorded by the trial Court that the presence of the petitioner could not be secured easily, appears to be recorded without applying mind. It follows that the petitioner was wrongly declared a proclaimed absconder in breach of the prescribed procedure. Therefore, the impugned

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order dated 19.05.2022 suffers from material illegalities and is liable to be quashed.

9. Accordingly, the present petition is disposed of and the impugned order dated 19.05.2022, passed by the Sub Divisional Judicial Magistrate, Bholath in case FIR No. 73 dated 03.07.2020, registered under Sections 341, 323, 149 and 354 (added later on) of the IPC at Police Station Begowal, District Kapurthala is quashed with all consequential proceedings arising therefrom.

10. However, the petitioner is directed to surrender before the Court concerned within a period of four weeks, subject to order for grant of anticipatory bail, if any passed on his petition to be filed under Section 438 of the Cr.P.C. In the absence of any order for grant of anticipatory bail and on such surrender, the petitioner shall be liable to be remanded to judicial custody subject to any order for grant of regular bail to be passed by the concerned Court in accordance with law.

11. Needless to observe that in case any application is filed before the concerned Court for grant of regular bail, then the concerned Court shall be bound to dispose of the same expeditiously and that nothing in this order shall be treated as expression of any opinion on merits so as to bind or influence the concerned Court in disposal of the same.

16.01.2024

Waseem Ansari

(MANISHA BATRA)
JUDGE

Whether speaking/reasoned

Yes

Whether reportable

Yes