

IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA AT CHANDIGARH**106.****CRR No.257 of 2024 (O&M)**

Date of Decision:07.02.2024

Dharmender Singh

... Petitioner

Versus

Pala Ram

... Respondent

CORAM : HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE HARPREET SINGH BRARPresent: Mr. Yaseen Sethi, Advocate
for the petitioner.

HARPREET SINGH BRAR, J. (ORAL)

1. The present petition has been filed challenging the order dated 14.12.2023 passed by the learned Additional Sessions Judge, Kaithal in Criminal Appeal No.356 of 2019 whereby the petitioner has been directed to deposit 20% of the compensation amount as awarded by the learned trial Court within a period of 60 days from the date of passing of the said order.

2. In brief, facts of the case are that a complaint was filed by the respondent against the petitioner under Section 138 of the Negotiable Instrument Act, 1881 (hereinafter referred to as the NI Act) on the allegation that petitioner along with one Jitendra Kumar son of Suraj Bhan agreed to sell a plot measuring 144 sq. yards @ Rs.5521/- per square yard in favour of the respondent and received an amount of Rs.7,95,024/- from him on 30.04.2012. Thereafter, they sold the said plot to some other person. In this regard, the respondent filed a complaint to the Superintendent of Police, Kaithal on 18.12.2015. However, the matter was compromised and in order to discharge his legal liability, the petitioner issued a cheque bearing No.288626 dated 10.06.2016 for an amount of Rs.7,95,024/-, which on presentation, was dishonoured with remarks 'funds insufficient' vide memo dated 10.06.2016. In the said complaint, the petitioner was convicted vide

judgment dated 22.08.2019 passed by the learned Judicial Magistrate 1st Class, Kaithal and sentenced to undergo simple imprisonment for six months and further to pay compensation to the tune of Rs.7,95,024/- i.e. equivalent to the cheque amount. Against the aforesaid judgment of conviction and order of sentence, the petitioner preferred an appeal before the learned Additional Sessions Judge, Kaithal, who vide order dated 14.12.2023 directed him to pay 20% of the compensation. Against this order, the petitioner approached this Court by way of instant petition.

3. Learned counsel for the petitioner *inter alia* contends that while allowing the bail application of the petitioner, imposition of condition to deposit 20% of the compensation amount is unjust and arbitrary and against the proposition of law settled in the judgment passed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in ***Jamboo Bhandari Vs. MP Industrial Development Corporation Ltd. and others 2013 (12) SCALE 611*** wherein it is held that deposit of minimum 20% of the compensation amount is not an absolute rule. It is further contended that deposit of 20% of the compensation amount cannot be a condition precedent while allowing bail to the petitioner and the learned Appellate Court ought to have considered the exceptional circumstances for waiving off the said condition.

3. Having heard learned counsel for the petitioner and after perusing the record of the case, it transpires that the lower Appellate Court has passed the impugned order without considering the exceptional circumstances qua imposition of condition of deposit of 20% of the compensation amount.

4. A two Judge Bench of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in ***Jamboo Bhandari's case*** (supra), speaking through Justice Abhay S. Oka has held as under:-

“6. What is held by this Court is that a purposive interpretation should be made of Section 148 of the N.I. Act. Hence, normally,

Appellate Court will be justified in imposing the condition of deposit as provided in Section 148. However, in a case where the Appellate Court is satisfied that the condition of deposit of 20% will be unjust or imposing such a condition will amount to deprivation of the right of appeal of the appellant, exception can be made for the reasons specifically recorded.

7. Therefore, when Appellate Court considers the prayer under Section 389 of the Cr.P.C. of an accused, who has been convicted for offence under Section 138 of the N.I. Act, it is always open for the Appellate Court to consider whether it is an exceptional case which warrants grant of suspension of sentence without imposing the condition of deposit of 20% of the fine/compensation amount. As stated earlier, if the Appellate Court comes to the conclusion that it is an exceptional case, the reasons for coming to the said conclusion must be recorded.”

5. In view of the settled law, the lower Appellate Court was required to consider whether the present case falls in the exception or not. Consequently, the impugned order dated 14.12.2023 is set aside to the extent of imposition of condition of depositing 20% of the compensation amount and the matter is remanded back to the lower Appellate Court to re-examine the case after granting an opportunity to the petitioner to make submissions regarding the exceptional circumstances, which warrants waiver of the requirement of deposit of 20% of the compensation awarded by the learned trial Court, in the light of judgment passed by the Hon’ble Supreme Court in ***Jamboo Bhandari’s case*** (supra).

6. The instant petition stands disposed of in above terms.

(HARPREET SINGH BRAR)
JUDGE

February 07, 2024
Pankaj*

Whether speaking/reasoned	Yes
Whether reportable	No