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IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA AT
CHANDIGARH

CRM-M-13487-2024 (O&M)
Date of decision: 18.03.2024

Manish @ Manish Singh @ Manu

... Petitioner

Vs.

State of Punjab

... Respondent

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE HARPREET SINGH BRAR

Present: Mr. Brahmjot Singh Nahar, Advocate
for the petitioner.

HARPREET SINGH BRAR, J. (ORAL)

The prayer in the present petition under Section 482 Cr.P.C. is for quashing the impugned orders dated 03.08.2023 (Annexure P-2), dated 03.11.2023 (Annexure P-3), dated 11.12.2023 (Annexure P-4) and dated 01.02.2024 (Annexure P-5) passed by the learned trial Court, vide which the petitioner has been summoned through non-bailable warrants of arrest and the order dated 15.02.2024 (Annexure P-6) passed in FIR No.36 dated 04.04.2020 under Sections 61/1/14 of Punjab Excise Act, 1914, registered at Police Station Anandpur Sahib, District Rupnagar, vide which proceedings for declaring him as proclaimed offender have been initiated as well as all consequential proceedings emanating therefrom.

2. Learned counsel appearing for the petitioner, *inter alia*, contends that that the petitioner is serving in the armed forces and he was granted the concession of interim bail in view of general directions dated 10.04.2020 issued by this Court. On 03.08.2023, 03.11.2023, 11.12.2023 and 01.02.2024, learned trial Court issued summons through non-bailable warrants of arrest, to the petitioner and due to some avoidable circumstances, he could not appear. Now vide order dated 15.02.2024 (Annexure P-6), the learned trial Court initiated the proceedings for declaring the petitioner as proclaimed offender. Aggrieved by the said impugned orders, the petitioner has approached this Court by way of instant petition.

3. Learned counsel appearing for the petitioner submits that the impugned orders are liable to be set aside on the ground that the mandate of Section 82 Cr.P.C. has not been followed in its letter and spirit by the learned trial Court. In support of his arguments, counsel for the petitioner relies upon the judgment passed by this Court in ***Sonu vs. State of Haryana 2021 (1) RCR (Cri.) 319*** and the judgment passed by the Gujarat High Court in ***Govindbhai Patel Vs. State of Gujarat 2004 (4) RCR (Criminal) 830***.

4. Learned counsel appearing for the petitioner submits that the non-appearance of the petitioner was not deliberate and intentional and thus, aggrieved by the said orders, he has approached this Court by way of instant petition. It is contended that the impugned orders are liable to be set aside on the ground of unintentional non-appearance of the petitioner, as stated above.

5. It is also submitted that the petitioner undertakes to appear

before the trial Court on each and every date.

6. Notice of motion.

7. Mr. Subhash Godara, Addl. AG, Punjab, who is present in Court, accepts notice on behalf of the respondent and submits that the impugned orders have been passed on the sole ground of the absence of the petitioner, however, it is not disputed by him that petitioner was already on bail.

8. I have heard learned counsel for the parties and perused the record of the case with their able assistance and with the consent of parties, the matter is taken up for final disposal.

9. A perusal of the order dated 15.02.2024 (Annexure P-6) reflects that the trial Court proceeded to initiate proceedings for declaring the petitioner as proclaimed offender. Many a times, the accused can be prevented by sufficient reasons to put an appearance before the Court on a given date and, therefore, it necessarily cannot be construed as a deliberate and wilful absence. The explanation offered for non-appearance before the trial Court is justified and, therefore, the same is accepted.

10. While the scheme of criminal justice system necessitates curtailment of personal liberty to some extent, it is of the utmost importance that the same is done in line with the procedure established by law to maintain a healthy balance between personal liberty of the individual-accused and interests of the society in promoting law and order. Such procedure must be compatible with Article 21 of the Constitution of India

i.e. it must be fair, just and not suffer from the vice of arbitrariness or unreasonableness.

11. The sole purpose of issuance of non-bailable warrants is to secure presence of the accused before the trial Court. The petitioner in the present case has himself come forward and has undertaken to appear before the trial Court on each and every date.

12. In view of the aforesaid facts and circumstances, the present petition is allowed. The impugned orders dated 03.08.2023 (Annexure P-2), dated 03.11.2023 (Annexure P-3), dated 11.12.2023 (Annexure P-4) and dated 01.02.2024 (Annexure P-5), vide which the petitioner has been summoned through non-bailable warrants of arrest and the order dated 15.02.2024 (Annexure P-6), vide which proceedings for declaring him as proclaimed offender have been initiated, are hereby set aside.

13. The petitioner is directed to appear before the trial Court within a period of four weeks from today and on his doing so, he shall be admitted to bail on his furnishing bail bonds and surety bonds to the satisfaction of the trial Court, along with costs of Rs.10,000/- to be deposited with the District Legal Services Authority, Rupnagar, for wasting precious time of the Court.

18.03.2024
vishnu

[HARPREET SINGH BRAR]
JUDGE

Whether speaking/reasoned : Yes/No

Whether reportable : Yes/No