

IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA AT  
CHANDIGARH

289

CRM-M-23139-2024  
Date of decision: 28.05.2024

SUKHVIR SINGH AND ANR.

...PETITIONERS

V/s

STATE OF PUNJAB AND ANOTHER

...RESPONDENTS

CORAM: HON’BLE MR. JUSTICE SUMEET GOEL

Present: Mr. Amit Dhawan, Advocate  
for the petitioners.

Mr. Yuvraj Singh Tiwana, AAG, Punjab.

Mr. Arnav Sood, Advocate  
for respondent No.2.

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SUMEET GOEL, J.

1. This petition has been filed under Section 438 Cr.P.C. for grant of anticipatory bail to the petitioners in FIR No.65 dated 27.04.2024, registered for offences punishable under Sections 406, 498-A, 506 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860, at Police Station Bullowal, District Hoshiarpur.

2. On 09.05.2024, the following order was passed:-

*“Apprehending their arrest in FIR No.65 dated 27.04.2024 registered for offences punishable under Sections 406, 498-A, 506 IPC at Police Station Bullowal, District Hoshiarpur; the petitioners have preferred this petition under Section 438 Cr.P.C. seeking pre-arrest bail.*

*Inter alia contends that the real genesis of the FIR in question is matrimonial discord between the complainant-wife and son of the petitioners; petitioner No.1 is suffering from cancer; petitioner No.2 is a lady aged about 53 years; the petitioners are willing to return all the dowry articles/istridhan including gold articles in their possession; the petitioners are also willing for an amicable settlement; the petitioners are also willing to join investigation and cooperate therein. In order to buttress his argument, learned counsel for the petitioners has relied upon the dicta of judgments of Hon’ble Supreme Court in Arnesh Kumar vs.*

*State of Bihar, 2014(8) SCC 273 and Mohd. Asfak Alam vs. State of Jharkhand and another, 2023 (8) SCC 632.*

*Notice of motion.*

*On the asking of the Court, Mr. Adhiraj Singh, AAG, Punjab, appears and accepts notice on behalf of the respondent State. Mr. Manpreet Singh, Advocate for Mr. Arnav Sood, Advocate, has entered appearance and has filed Power of Attorney on behalf of respondent No.2. The same be kept on record.*

*The petitioners are directed to appear before the Investigating Officer on 14.05.2024 at 11:00 A.M. in concerned Police Station and join investigation. In the event of arrest, the petitioners shall be released on interim bail subject to their furnishing personal/surety bond(s) to the satisfaction of the Arresting Officer/Investigating Officer. As and when further called by Investigating Officer, the petitioners shall join the investigation. They shall abide by the condition(s) enumerated under Section 438(2) of the Cr.P.C.”*

3. Learned State counsel, on instructions from ASI Surinder Pal, has stated that pursuant to the order dated 09.05.2024, the petitioners have joined investigation and are no longer required for custodial interrogation. However, learned State counsel as also the learned counsel for the complainant have submitted that only partial recovery of dowry articles has been effected and remaining dowry articles are yet to be recovered.

4. Learned counsel for the petitioners have submitted that no dowry articles/*Istri-dhan* are in possession of the petitioners and, in fact, the entire dowry articles/*Istri-dhan* is with the aggrieved-wife.

5. I have heard the learned counsel for the rival parties and have perused the paper book.

6. It will be apposite to refer to a judgment dated 12.02.2024 passed by this Court in CRM-M-60647-2023 titled as **“Varun Sharma Vs. State of Punjab and another”**, relevant whereof reads as under:

*“11. As a sequel to the above said discussion, the following principle of law emerge :-*

*(I) Non-recovery of dowry articles/Istri-dhan cannot ordinarily be a ground, by itself, for declining a plea for grant of anticipatory bail to the husband or his relatives.*

*(II) The conduct of an accused, is indeed, a relevant factor for consideration of a plea for grant of anticipatory bail on behalf of such accused. Such conduct would also include the cooperation, in accordance with law, extended by such accused for recovery of dowry articles/Istri-dhan. Whether or not such cooperation was extended by the accused would be ascertainable from the facts and circumstances of a given case.*

*(III) In exceptional cases, if the peculiar and/or accentuating facts/circumstances of the case so warrant, a Court would be well within its discretion to pass a direction to the petitioner- accused to deposit in Court or remit to the complainant-wife an appropriate amount towards the Istri-dhan/dowry articles. Needless to state herein that it is neither possible nor desirable to enumerate a set of guidelines in this regard & a Court would have to exercise its judicial discretion in this regard in the facts and circumstances of a given case.”*

7. Non-recovery of dowry articles/Istri-dhan in entirety thereof cannot, by itself, be a cause for rejection of the present plea for anticipatory bail by the petitioners especially when the State does not require custodial interrogation of petitioners on any other count except for effecting recovery of remaining dowry articles/Istri-dhan. The aspect, as to what all are the dowry articles/Istri-dhan in question in the present case & whether the entire dowry articles have been or not, shall be essentially gone into during the course of trial. No accentuating circumstances are decipherable, from the factual matrix of the present case, so as to direct the petitioners to deposit

any amount towards the alleged non-recovery of complete dowry articles. No such misconduct by the petitioners has been pointed out which may dissuade this Court from confirming the interim anticipatory bail to the petitioners.

8. In view of above, the petition is allowed and interim order dated 09.05.2024 passed by this Court is made absolute, subject to the conditions as enumerated under Section 438(2) Cr.P.C.

9. This order should not be treated as “blanket” order. It will not be interpreted as granting petitioners indefinite protection from arrest. It shall be confined to the FIR mentioned ibid and will not operate in respect of any other incident that involves commission of an offence.

10. Liberty is reserved in favour of State/complainant to move for cancellation/recall of this order in case the petitioners violates any condition stipulated under Section 438(2) Cr.P.C., 1973 or upon showing any other sufficient cause.

11. Needless to say that anything observed herein above shall not be construed to be an opinion on the merits of the case.

12. Pending application(s), if any, shall also stand disposed off.

(SUMEET GOEL)  
JUDGE

May 28, 2024  
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