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IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA
AT CHANDIGARH

CRM-M-26628-2024 (O&M)
Date of Decision: 31.07.2024

SUNNY GROVER

.. Petitioner

Vs.

STATE OF PUNJAB AND ANOTHER

..Respondents

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE SUMEET GOEL

Present: Mr. Ashish Nagar, Advocate for the petitioner.
Mr. Adhiraj Singh Thind, AAG, Punjab.
Mr. Amandeep Singh Jawandha, Advocate for respondent No.2.

...

SUMEET GOEL, J. (Oral)

1. This petition has been filed under Section 438 Cr.P.C. for grant of anticipatory bail to the petitioner in FIR No.0033 dated 15.04.2024 registered for offences punishable under Sections 406 and 498-A IPC at Police Station Women, Ludhiana.

2. On 24.05.2024, the following order was passed:

“Apprehending his arrest in FIR No. 0033 dated 15.04.2024 registered for offences punishable under Sections 406,498-A IPC at Police Station Women, Ludhiana; the petitioner has preferred this petition under Section 438 Cr.P.C. seeking pre-arrest bail.

Inter alia contends that the petitioner and complainant were married on 24.11.2017 and were even blessed with a child; the FIR in question emanates from matrimonial discord; petitioner is willing to return all the dowry articles/Istridhan including gold articles in his possession; petitioner is willing for an amicable settlement & petitioner is willing to join investigation and cooperate therein. In order to buttress his arguments, learned counsel for the petitioner has relied upon the dicta of the judgments of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in 'Md. Asfak Alam versus The State of Jharkhand and another 2023(3) R.C.R. (Criminal) 754 and Armesh Kumar versus State of Bihar' (2014) 8 SCR 128.

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Notice of motion.

On asking of the Court, Mr. Yuvraj Singh Tiwana, AAG, Punjab appears and accepts notice on behalf of the respondent-State.

Mr. Amandeep Singh Jawandha, Advocate has filed vakalatnama for respondent No. 2. The same be taken on record.

Adjourned to 11.07.2024.

The petitioner is directed to appear before the Investigating Officer on 29.05.2024 at 11:00 A.M. in concerned Police Station and join investigation. In the event of arrest, the petitioner shall be released on interim bail subject to his furnishing personal/surety bond(s) to the satisfaction of the Arresting Officer/Investigating Officer. As and when further called by Investigating Officer, the petitioner shall join the investigation. He shall abide by the condition(s) enumerated under Section 438(2) of the Cr.P.C.”

3. On 18.07.2024, the following order was passed:

“Learned State counsel, on instructions from SI Meet Ram Singh, submits that the petitioner has joined the investigation in terms of the order dated 24.05.2024 but has not cooperated therein especially for recovery of the dowry articles including the gold articles.

Faced with the situation, learned counsel for the petitioner submits that petitioner shall re-join the investigation before the Investigating Officer on 24.07.2024 at 11.00 A.M. in the concerned Police Station and cooperate therein in accordance with law including for having requisite recovery effected.

Adjourned to 31.07.2024.

Interim order to continue.”

4. Learned State counsel, on instructions from ASI Surinder Singh, has stated that pursuant to the order dated 24.05.2024, the petitioner has joined investigation and is 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.
5. Learned counsel for the petitioner has submitted that no dowry articles/Istridhan as alleged are in possession of the petitioner.



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

7. 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 principles 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.”

8. Non-recovery of dowry articles/Istridhan in entirety thereof cannot, by itself, be a cause for rejection of the present plea for anticipatory bail by the petitioner especially when the State does not require custodial interrogation of petitioner on any other count except for effecting recovery of remaining dowry articles/Istridhan. The aspect, as to what all are the

dowry articles/Istridhan in question in the present case & whether the entire

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

9. In view of above, the petition is allowed and interim order dated 24.05.2024 passed by this Court is made absolute, subject to the conditions as enumerated under Section 438(2) Cr.P.C.

10. This order should not be treated as “blanket” order. It will not be interpreted as granting petitioner 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.

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

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

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

31.07.2024
Jasmine Kaur

(SUMEET GOEL)
JUDGE