

207

IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA
AT CHANDIGARH

CRM-M-33083-2023 (O&M)
Date of Decision: 05.03.2024

ASHOK SINGH

.. Petitioner

Vs.

STATE OF PUNJAB & ANR

..Respondents

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE SUMEET GOEL

Present: Mr. Anil Kumar Garg, Advocate for the petitioner.

Mr. Anup Singh, AAG, Punjab.

Mr. Arun Abrol, 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.0031 dated 04.05.2023, registered for offences under Sections 498-A, 406 and 120-B of the Indian Penal Code, 1860, at Police Station Kahnuwan, District Gurdaspur.
2. On 13.07.2023, the following order was passed:

“Learned counsel for the petitioner would contend that the petitioner is willing to settle the matter in entirety with the complainant. The learned counsel would further contend that petitioner has been living at her parental place for the last two years, even as per the allegations in the FIR.

Notice of motion.

Mr. Adhiraj Singh, AAG Punjab accepts notice on behalf of respondent No.1-State of Punjab.

On the oral request of learned counsel for the petitioner, the complainant - Diksha Devi wife of Ashok Singh daughter of Bawa Singh, resident of Village Chib, Police Station Kahnuwan, District Gurdaspur – is impleaded as respondent No.2. Registry to carry out necessary addition in the memo of parties.

Let notice be issued to respondent No.2 returnable 18.09.2023.

The petitioner shall bring a bank draft for Rs.30,000/- in the name of the respondent No.2-wife towards litigation expenses on the next date of hearing.

Meanwhile, the petitioner is directed to join investigation as and when called. In the event of arrest, the petitioner shall be admitted to interim bail on furnishing adequate surety and personal bonds to the satisfaction of the Arresting Officer. The petitioner shall also abide by all the terms and conditions as specified in Section 438(2) of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973.”

3. Learned State counsel, on instructions from ASI Palwinder Singh, has stated that pursuant to the order dated 13.07.2023, the petitioner has joined investigation and is no longer required for custodial interrogation. However, learned State counsel as also the learned counsel for respondent No.2/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 petitioner has submitted that no dowry articles/Istridhan as alleged are in possession of the petitioner.

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 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.”

7. 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 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.

8. In view of above, the petition is allowed and interim order dated 13.07.2023 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

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 petitioner 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.

05.03.2024

(SUMEET GOEL)
JUDGE

Jasmine Kaur

Whether speaking/reasoned	Yes	No
Whether reportable	Yes	No