



IN THE HIGH COURT FOR THE STATES OF PUNJAB AND
HARYANA AT CHANDIGARH

124

CRM-M-64243-2023 (O&M)
Date of decision: 31.05.2024

Gurjant Singh and others ...Petitioners

Versus

State of Punjab ...Respondent

CORAM: HON'BLE MRS. JUSTICE MANISHA BATRA

Present:- Mr. P. S. Sekhon, Advocate
for the petitioners.

Ms. Ruchika Sabherwal, Sr. DAG, Punjab.

MANISHA BATRA, J. (Oral)

1. The instant petition has been filed by the petitioners under Section 482 Cr.P.C. for quashing of order dated 24.01.2020, passed by the learned Additional Sessions Judge, Sangrur in case titled as *State vs. Jagdev Singh and others*, arising out of DDR No. 2 dated 06.10.2016 registered in FIR No. 142 dated 06.10.2016, under Sections 302, 307, 323, 506, 341, 148, 149, 427, 201, 354 of IPC and Sections 3, 4 of the SC/ST Act, 1989 at Police Station Lehra, District Sangrur, whereby the petitioners had been declared as proclaimed offenders.
2. The present petition has been filed by the petitioners on the grounds and it has been argued by their counsel that the petitioners have been falsely implicated in this case. It is a case of version and cross version. The petitioners had been availing their legal remedy of anticipatory bail, which was declined and thereafter, the final report under Section 173 of Cr.P.C. had

been submitted before the Court. They never joined the proceedings as they were never served with the summons/notice/warrants. However, they have been declared as proclaimed offenders without following the proper procedure prescribed under Section 82 Cr.P.C. With these broad submissions, learned counsel for the petitioners has argued that the impugned order is liable to be set aside.

3. Learned State counsel has argued that the petitioners were having knowledge about the pendency of the trial and had intentionally avoided their appearance before the trial Court. Therefore, they have rightly been declared proclaimed offenders. Hence, it is urged that the petition is liable to be dismissed.

4. I have heard learned counsel for the parties and have also gone through the material placed on record.

5. On giving due deliberations to the contentions as raised by learned counsel for the parties and on an overall perusal of the orders passed by the trial Court from the date of initiating proceedings under Section 82 Cr.P.C. as against the petitioners till the date of declaring them as proclaimed offenders, I am of the considered opinion that the impugned order dated 24.01.2020 suffers from material illegalities and is liable to be quashed with all the consequential proceedings arising therefrom.

6. At the outset, it would be relevant to refer to the provision of Section 82 Cr.P.C., which provides for publication of proclamation against the person absconding. It reads as under:

“82. Proclamation for person absconding. –

(1) If any Court has reason to believe (whether after taking evidence or not) that any person against whom a warrant has been issued by it has absconded or is concealing himself so that

such warrant cannot be executed, such Court may publish a written proclamation requiring him to appear at a specified place and at a specified time not less than thirty days from the date of publishing such proclamation.

(2) The proclamation shall be published as follows:-

(i) (a) it shall be publicly read in some conspicuous place of the town or village in which such person ordinarily resides;

(b) it shall be affixed to some conspicuous part of the house or homestead in which such person ordinarily resides or to some conspicuous place of such town or village;

(c) a copy thereof shall be affixed to some conspicuous part of the Court-house;

(ii) the Court may also, if it thinks fit, direct a copy of the proclamation to be published in a daily newspaper circulating in the place in which such person ordinarily resides.

(3) A statement in writing by the Court issuing the proclamation to the effect that the proclamation was duly published on a specified day, in the manner specified in clause (i) of sub-section (2), shall be conclusive evidence that the requirements of this section have been complied with, and that the proclamation was published on such day.

(4) Where a proclamation published under sub-section (1) is in respect of a person accused of an offence punishable under section 302, 304, 364, 367, 382, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 402, 436, 449, 459 or 460 of the Indian Penal Code (45 of 1860), and such person fails to appear at the specified place and time required by the proclamation, the Court may, after making such inquiry as it thinks fit, pronounce him a proclaimed offender and make a declaration to that effect.

(5) The provisions of sub-sections (2) and (3) shall apply to a declaration made by the Court under sub-section (4) as they apply to the proclamation published under subsection (1).”

7. There are catena of judgments of different High Courts discussing the requirements necessary for issuance and publication of

proclamation against an absconder under Section 82 Cr.P.C. and for declaring him as a proclaimed person/offender. These requirements have been discussed from time to time in *Rohit Kumar Vs. State of Delhi : 2008 CrL J. 2561*, *Rohit Kumar Vs. State of Delhi : 2008 CrL J. 2561*, *Bishundayal Mahton and others Vs. Emperor : AIR 1943 Patna 366*, *Devender Singh Negi Vs. State of U.P. : 1994 CrL LJ (Allahabad HC) 1783*, *Gurappa Gugal and others Vs. State of Mysore : 1969 CriLJ 826*, *Shokat Ali Vs. State of Haryana : 2020(2) RCR (Criminal) 339*, *Dilbagh Singh Vs. State of Punjab : (P&H) 2015 (8) R.C.R. (criminal) 166*, *Ashok Kumar Vs. State of Haryana and another : 2013 (4) RCR (Criminal) 550*, *Pawan Kumar Gupta Vs. The State of W.B. : 1973 CriLJ 1368*, *Birad Dan Vs. State : 1958 CriLJ 965*, *Negialias Debu Vs. State of U.P. and another, 1994 Cri LJ 1783* and *Pal Singh Vs. The State : 1955 CriLJ 318*.

8. The position of law as laid down in the above cited authorities may be summarized as under:

- (i) Prior issuance of warrant of arrest by the Court is sine qua non for issuance and publication of the proclamation and the Court has to first issue warrant of arrest against the person concerned.
- (ii) There must be a report before the Court that the person against whom warrant was issued had absconded or had been concealing himself so that the warrant of arrest could not be executed against him. However, the Court is not bound to take evidence in this regard before issuing a Proclamation under Section 82 (1) of the Cr.P.C.
- (iii) The Court cannot issue the Proclamation as a matter of course because the Police is asking for it. The Court must be prima facie satisfied that the person has absconded or is concealing himself so that the warrant of arrest, previously issued, cannot be executed, despite reasonable diligence.

(iv) The requisite date and place for appearance must be specified in the proclamation requiring such person to appear on such date at the specified place. Such date must not be less than 30 clear days from the date of issuance and publication of the proclamation.

(v) Where the period between issuance and publication of the proclamation and the specified date of hearing is less than thirty days, the accused cannot be declared a proclaimed person/offender and the proclamation has to be issued and published again.

(vi) The Proclamation has to be published in the manner laid down in Section 82 (2) of the Cr.P.C.. For publication, the proclamation has to be first publicly read in some conspicuous place of the town or village in which the accused ordinarily resides; then the same has to be affixed to some conspicuous part of the house or homestead in which the accused ordinarily resides or to some conspicuous place of such town or village and thereafter a copy of the proclamation has to be affixed to some conspicuous part of the Court-house. The three sub-clauses (a)- (c) in Section 82 (2)(i) of the Cr.P.C. are conjunctive and not disjunctive, which means that there would be no valid publication of the proclamation unless all the three modes of publication are proved. Where the Court so orders a copy of the proclamation has to be additionally published in a daily newspaper circulating in the place in which the accused ordinarily resides. Advisably, proclamation has to be issued with four copies so that one each of the three copies of the proclamation may be affixed to some conspicuous part of the house or homestead in which the accused ordinarily resides, to some conspicuous place of such town or village and to some conspicuous part of the Courthouse and report regarding publication may be made on the fourth copy of the proclamation. Additional copy will be required where the proclamation is also required to be published in the newspaper.

(vii) Statement of the serving officer has to be recorded by the Court as to the date and mode of publication of the proclamation.

(viii) The Court issuing the proclamation has to make a statement in writing in its order that the proclamation was duly published on a specified day in a manner specified in Section 82(2)(i) of the Cr.P.C.. Such statement in writing by the Court is declared to be conclusive evidence that the requirements of Section 82 have been complied with and that the proclamation was published on such day.

(xi) The conditions specified in Section 82(2) of the Cr.P.C. for the publication of a Proclamation against an absconder are mandatory. Any non-compliance therewith cannot be cured as an 'irregularity' and renders the Proclamation and proceedings subsequent thereto, a nullity.

9. On applying the above discussed position of law to the peculiar facts and circumstances of the present case and on a perusal of the copies of the zimini orders, which have been placed on record, it is revealed since the presence of the petitioners could not be secured despite issuance of non-bailable warrants, the trial Court, vide order dated 08.11.2019, had ordered for issuance of proclamation against the petitioner for 05.12.2019. Meaning there that the petitioners were not granted mandatory period of 30 days to cause their appearance before the trial Court. A perusal of order dated 05.12.2019 shows that since the proclamation was received back unexecuted, the trial Court issued fresh proclamation for 02.01.2020, which means that the petitioners were again not granted mandatory time to cause their appearance before the Court as only 27 days' time was granted them do so. Hence, the same was in clear violation of the provisions of Section 82(1) Cr.P.C., as per which, a specified time of not less than 30 days is required to be given to the accused from the date of publishing such proclamation which is mandatory in nature. Reliance in this regard can be placed upon *Gurappa Gugal and*

others Vs. State of Mysore : 1969 CriLJ 826 and *Shokat Ali Vs. State of Haryana : 2020(2) RCR (Criminal) 339.*

10. Further, a perusal of order dated 03.01.2020 reveals that when the matter was taken up on that date, the proclamation was received back executed, however, since the period of 30 days had not elapsed, the matter was adjourned to 17.01.2020 awaiting the appearance of the petitioners. However, while adjourning the case to 17.01.2020, the trial Court failed to consider the fact that it could not have extended the time by simply adjourning the case as a fresh proclamation was required to be published once the period between issuance of publication of proclamation and the specified period of hearing was less than 30 days. Reference in this context can be made to *Dilbagh Singh Vs. State of Punjab (P&H) : 2015 (8) R.C.R. (criminal) 166.*

11. Accordingly, in view of the discussion as made above, the present petition is allowed and the impugned order dated 24.01.2020, passed by the learned Additional Sessions Judge, Sangrur in case titled as *State vs. Jagdev Singh and others*, arising out of DDR No. 2 dated 06.10.2016 registered in FIR No. 142 dated 06.10.2016, under Sections 302, 307, 323, 506, 341, 148, 149, 427, 201, 354 of IPC and Sections 3, 4 of the SC/ST Act, 1989 at Police Station Lehra, District Sangrur, whereby the petitioners had been declared as proclaimed offenders, is quashed with all consequential proceedings arising therefrom.

12. However, the petitioners are directed to surrender before the Court concerned within a period of four weeks, subject to order for grant of anticipatory bail, if any passed on their petition(s) to be filed under Section 438 of the Cr.P.C. In the absence of any order for grant of anticipatory bail and on such surrender, the petitioners shall be liable to be remanded to judicial

custody subject to any order for grant of regular bail to be passed by the concerned Court in accordance with law.

13. Needless to observe that in case any application is filed before the concerned Court for grant of regular bail, then the concerned Court shall be bound to dispose of the same expeditiously and that nothing in this order shall be treated as expression of any opinion on merits so as to bind or influence the concerned Court in disposal of the same.

14. Till the appearance of the petitioners before the trial Court, their arrest shall remain stayed.

31.05.2024
Waseem Ansari

(MANISHA BATRA)
JUDGE

<i>Whether speaking/reasoned</i>	<i>Yes</i>
<i>Whether reportable</i>	<i>Yes</i>