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AT CHANDIGARH**

CRM-M-3848-2025
Date of decision: 28.01.2025

M/s Devgan Rice and General Mills

....Petitioner

Versus

M/s Rashpal Singh Commission Agent and another

...Respondents

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE HARPREET SINGH BRAR

Present: Mr. Umesh Aggarwal, Advocate
for the petitioner.

HARPREET SINGH BRAR, J. (ORAL)

The present petition under Section 528 of Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 for setting aside the order dated 24.12.2024 (Annexure P-3) passed by the learned Sessions Judge, Tarn Taran in CRA-151-2024 titled as 'M/s Devgan Rice Mills Vs. M/s Rashpal Singh Commission Agent' vide which the petitioner is directed to deposit 20% of the amount of compensation awarded by the learned trial Court.

Brief facts of the case are that a complaint was filed by the respondents against the petitioner under Section 138 of the Negotiable Instruments Act, 1881 (for short 'the Act') on the ground of dishonouring of cheque bearing No.33047354 dated 26.03.2016 amounting to Rs.1,70,590.04/- issued in favour of the complainant/respondents by the petitioner in discharge of its liability. Vide judgment of conviction and order of sentence dated 29.11.2024, Naresh Kumar partner of the petitioner-Company was convicted and sentenced to undergo rigorous imprisonment for a period of six months and was further directed to pay compensation to the tune of Rs.50,000/-.



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Thereafter, the petitioner preferred an appeal against the said judgment of conviction and order of sentence before the learned Sessions Judge, Tarn Taran. The learned Appellate Court vide order dated 24.12.2024, suspended the sentence of the petitioner subject to depositing 20% of the cheque amount uptill 20.01.2025.

Learned counsel for the petitioner *inter alia* contends that the learned lower Appellate Court failed to appreciate the facts in the right perspective and imposed the condition to deposit 20% of the compensation and such a condition is illegal, arbitrary and in violation of the law as laid down by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in Criminal Appeal Nos.2741 of 2023 (@ SLP(Crl.) Nos. 4927 of 2023 ***Jamboo Bhandari vs. M.P. State Industrial Development Corporation Ltd. and others***, decided on 04.09.2023. Speaking through Justice Abhay S. Oka, it has been held as follows:-

“6. What is held by this Court is that a purposive interpretation should be made of Section 148 of the N.I. Act. Hence, normally, Appellate Court will be justified in imposing the condition of deposit as provided in Section 148. However, in a case where the Appellate Court is satisfied that the condition of deposit of 20% will be unjust or imposing such a condition will amount to deprivation of the right of appeal of the appellant, exception can be made for the reasons specifically recorded.

7. Therefore, when Appellate Court considers the prayer under Section 389 of the Cr.P.C. of an accused who has been convicted for offence under Section 138 of the N.I. Act, it is always open for the Appellate Court to consider whether it is an exceptional case which warrants grant of suspension of sentence without imposing the condition of deposit of 20% of the fine/compensation amount. As stated earlier, if the Appellate Court comes to the conclusion that it is an exceptional case, the reasons for coming to the said 4 conclusion must be recorded.”



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Having heard learned counsel for the petitioner and after perusing the judgment passed in *Jamboo Bhandari (supra)*, the lower Appellate Court was required to consider whether the present case falls in the exception or not. The impugned order 24.12.2024 (Annexure P-3) whereby, the condition of depositing 20% of the cheque amount awarded has been imposed for granting suspension of sentence, is hereby set aside. The learned lower Appellate Court is directed to re-examine the case after granting an opportunity to the petitioner to make submissions regarding the exceptional circumstances and decide whether it is an appropriate case that warrants waiver of the requirement of deposit of 20% of the compensation awarded by learned trial Court.

The matter is remanded back to the learned lower Appellate Court with a direction to decide the matter afresh in accordance with law in the light of judgment passed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in *Jamboo Bhandari's case (supra)*.

The petition is disposed of accordingly.

(HARPREET SINGH BRAR)
JUDGE

28.01.2025

Neha

Whether speaking/reasoned	:	Yes/No
Whether reportable	:	Yes/No