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**IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA AT
CHANDIGARH**

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Date of decision: 25.08.2025

Manoj Kumar

...Petitioner

V/s

State of Punjab

...Respondent

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE SUMEET GOEL

Present: Mr. Gurminder S. Salana, Advocate for the petitioner.

Mr. Gurpartap S. Bhullar, AAG Punjab.

SUMEET GOEL, J. (Oral)

1. Present petition has been filed under Section 582 of BNS, 2023, seeking quashing of order dated 24.12.2024 (Annexure P-9), passed by the learned Judicial Magistrate, 1st Class, Samrala in case CIS No. CHI-145/2016 titled as State vs. Manoj Kumar Jha in FIR No.51 dated 05.03.2015 registered under Sections 419, 420, 506 of IPC at Police Station Samrala, Police District Khanna, District Ludhiana whereby the petitioner was declared as proclaimed offender.

2. While assailing the impugned order, the learned counsel for the petitioner has iterated that the order declaring the petitioner as proclaimed offender is not sustainable and is liable to be set-aside. It has been further iterated that the Court below, in blatant violation of the provisions of the Cr.P.C., 1973 straightway proceeded to issue non-bailable warrants. It is further argued that no effective steps were taken in the case to serve the petitioner with warrants before issuance of proclamation against him. It has been further iterated that the impugned order has been passed based on fabricated and false reports. It is respectfully submitted by the learned

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counsel that the petitioner was neither personally served with any notice nor was any process properly executed or communicated to him. Learned counsel asserts that the impugned order has been passed in violation of the mandatory provisions of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973. It has been argued that the inability of the petitioner to join the proceedings was not deliberate. Learned counsel asserts that the impugned order is *ex facie* illegal, arbitrary and unsustainable in the eyes of law and is, therefore, liable to be set-aside. Furthermore, the Court below, while passing the impugned order, has failed to adopt the procedure envisaged under the law and thereby vitiated the entire process. Hence, the impugned order declaring the petitioner a proclaimed offender is unsustainable and deserves to be set-aside.

3. Learned State counsel has opposed the claim of the petitioner seeking quashing of the order declaring the petitioner as a proclaimed offender in the case. While refuting the case of the petitioner, detailed arguments concerning the merits of the case were made and it is argued that the offence alleged against the petitioner is serious and heinous. Referring to the short reply filed by way of affidavit of Tarlochan Singh, Deputy Superintendent of Police, Samrala, Police District Khanna, District Ludhiana, has submitted that the proclamation order was passed strictly in accordance with law as the petitioner, despite having full knowledge of the trial proceedings willfully evaded his appearance before the Court. According to him, the conduct of the petitioner shows a deliberate attempt to obstruct the course of justice. Furthermore, it has been submitted by the learned State counsel that the petitioner was served thorough non-bailable warrants but he did not appear which compelled the Court below to declare



him proclaimed person vide impugned order. Instead of surrendering before the competent Court, the petitioner has chosen to file the instant petition which clearly reflects his conduct that he was fully aware of the proceedings and the coercive measures undertaken by the Court below to secure his presence. Moreover, it has been stated that the learned Court below followed the procedure as laid-down under Section 82 of the Cr.P.C., 1973 in letter and spirit and no discrepancy whatsoever is forthcoming from the records of the case.

4. I have heard learned counsel for the rival parties and carefully perused the record of the case.

5. The facts of the present case narrate a very sordid course of procedure, adopted by the trial Court. As per the settled legal position, it is mandatory for the trial Court to record the statement of the concerned serving official, while dealing with the proceedings under Section 82 Cr.P.C. In the instant case, no publication was made and moreover, neither the date nor the particulars of the proclamation were mentioned and as such there is non-compliance of the Section 82 of Cr.P.C. which renders the proclamation and further proceedings null and void.

In the instant case, it is evident that the process claimed to have been undertaken was merely a paper formality, without actual compliance. Despite the aforesaid glaring irregularities, the Court below proceeded to mechanically pass the impugned order, declaring the petitioner a proclaimed person, in complete disregard of the mandatory procedural safeguards enshrined in the Cr.P.C. It appears that the impugned order reflects a stereotyped and perfunctory approach, rather than a judicious application of mind. The Judicial Magistrate noted that the “proclamation warrants of



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arrest” issued against the petitioner was shown as served, as per the report of the serving official and presumed that reasonable steps had been undertaken to bring the publication to the notice of the proclaimed person i.e. the petitioner and hence held that the publication process stood duly completed. As is apparent from the bare perusal of the orders dated 25.11.2024 as also order dated 24.12.2024, the learned Judicial Magistrate, on the basis of the report forwarded by the serving official, observed that the service upon the present petitioner had been effected and consequent to the petitioner’s non-appearance on the concerned dates recorded his satisfaction to the effect that the petitioner was absconding. Accordingly, the petitioner was declared a proclaimed offender.

6. I find the course adopted by the Judicial Magistrate, as antithesis to the provisions of Section 82 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973. The learned Judicial Magistrate has committed gross illegality by issuing the said proclamation under Section 82 of the Criminal Procedure Code, 1973, without complying with the mandatory requirements of law. Hence, the impugned order is not sustainable in law and its continuation would amount to abuse of the process of law. Section 82 of the Criminal Procedure Code, 1973 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 Sections 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 sub-section (1).]”

7. A coordinate Bench of this Court while dealing with invocation of the provision of Section 82 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, against an accused in the case of ‘**Sonu v. State of Haryana, 2021(1) RCR (Criminal) 319**’, held as under:

“9. The essential requirements of section 82 of the Cr.P.C., 1973 for issuance and publication of proclamation against an absconder and declaring him as proclaimed person/offender 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. (See Rohit Kumar v. State of Delhi: 2008 CrI. J. 2561).

(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., 1973. (See Rohit Kumar v. State of Delhi : 2008 CrI. J. 2561).

(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. (See Bishundayal Mahton and others v. Emperor : AIR 1943 Patna 366 and Devender Singh Negi v. State of U.P. : 1994 CrI LJ (Allahabad HC) 1783).

(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. (See Gurappa Gugal and others v. State of Mysore : 1969 CriLJ 826 and Shokat Ali v. State of Haryana : 2020(2) RCR (CRIMINAL) 339).

(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. (See Dilbagh Singh v. State of Punjab (P&H) : 2015 (8) RCR (CRIMINAL) 166 and Ashok Kumar v. State of Haryana and another : 2013 (4) RCR (CRIMINAL) 550)

(vi) The Proclamation has to be published in the manner laid down in section 82(2) of the Cr.P.C., 1973. 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., 1973 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. (See Pawan Kumar Gupta v. The State of W.B. : 1973 CriLJ 1368). 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. (See Birad Dan v. State: 1958 CriLJ 965).

(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., 1973. 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. (See Birad Dan v. State: 1958 CriLJ 965).

(xi) The conditions specified in section 82(2) of the Cr.P.C., 1973 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. (See Devendra Singh Negi alias Debu v. State of U.P. and another: 1994 CriLJ 1783 and Pal Singh v. The State: 1955 CriLJ 318)."

8. In view of the provisions of above cited Section 82 of the Code of Criminal Procedure and the authoritative judgment interpreting the applicability of the provisions of Section 82 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, the issuance of proclamation in the present case is clearly unsustainable. The impugned order dated 24.12.2024 vide which the petitioner has been declared a proclaimed offender under Section 82 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (Cr.P.C.), deserves to be set aside as it is vitiated by procedural irregularities and non-compliance with mandatory statutory requirements. A perusal of the sequence of events leading to the issuance of the proclamation reveals that the Ld. Judicial Magistrate First Class (JMFC) failed to adhere to the strict procedural safeguards enshrined under Section 82 of the Cr.P.C., thereby rendering the declaration *non est* in law.



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9. The genesis of the matter lies in the order dated 16.11.2024 wherein the Ld. JMIC noted that the petitioner/accused had failed to appear before the Court and, as a consequence, the Court held that the petitioner/accused was deliberately evading service and hence issued coercive steps. Finally, on 25.11.2024, the Ld. JMIC proceeded to note that more than 30 days had elapsed since the proclamation of accused but he did not appear and was thus, intentionally avoiding the proceedings. Moreover the proclamation for the service of the accused was duly served, culminating in the order declaring the petitioner a proclaimed offender. At the outset, it is pertinent to highlight that the procedure contemplated under Section 82(1) CrPC is mandatory and cannot be circumvented. For a person to be declared a proclaimed offender, the Court must record its satisfaction that the accused is absconding or is deliberately concealing himself to evade the execution of arrest warrants. This satisfaction must be based on cogent material placed before the Court and reflected in its orders. However, the orders passed by the Ld. JMIC in the present case are conspicuously silent on this critical aspect. At no point did the Ld. JMIC record its satisfaction that the petitioner was absconding or deliberately evading arrest. The absence of such satisfaction strikes at the root of the proclamation proceedings and renders the subsequent order declaring the petitioner a proclaimed offender legally unsustainable.

10. Furthermore, the proceedings under Section 82 Cr.P.C., 1973 must strictly comply with the prescribed statutory requirements. In ***Sonu's case (supra)*** the Court laid down that a declaration under Section 82 cannot be issued mechanically or as a matter of course. As per condition (ii) of para 9 of ***Sonu's case (supra)*** mandates that the Court must specifically ascertain



and record its satisfaction regarding the accused's intent to evade the process of law. The non-adherence to this cardinal principle in the instant case renders the impugned proclamation defective and without jurisdiction.

11. Additionally, the issuance of a proclamation in the form of a public notice, must be published in a prescribed manner, giving the accused a stipulated time to appear before the Court. This procedural safeguard was neither followed nor recorded in the present case. In view of the above, the non-compliance with mandatory requirements under Section 82 Cr.P.C., 1973 and the failure to adhere to the guidelines laid down in **Sonu's** case renders the declaration of the petitioner as a proclaimed offender legally infirm. Consequently, the impugned order deserves to be quashed and set aside in the interests of justice

12. It is pertinent to mention that by now it is a settled principle of law that the Court issuing the proclamation under Section 82 of Cr.P.C., 1973 must record its satisfaction that the accused in respect of whom the proclamation is being made, is absconding or concealing himself to evade his arrest. The predominant requirement for invocation of provisions of Section 82 of the Code of Criminal Procedure is clearly lacking in the present case. Perusal of order dated 25.11.2024 as also order dated 24.12.2024 passed by the Judicial Magistrate shows that no satisfaction has been recorded while issuing the proclamation that the accused-petitioner has absconded or is concealing himself so that warrants of arrest against him cannot be executed. There was no material present before the Judicial Magistrate to record such a satisfaction. Rather, the case put forth by the petitioner before this Court, that no publication was ever made, which



clearly shows that he was never served with any warrants before issuance of proclamation against him.

13. Strangely, the impugned order dated 24.12.2024 passed by the Judicial Magistrate, declaring the petitioner as proclaimed offender has relied upon statement of serving official to hold that the proclamation issued against the petitioner has been effected. As was enunciated in para 9 (vi) of the judgment in the case of *Sonu* (supra), the proclamation has to be published in the manner laid down in section 82(2) of the Cr.P.C., 1973. For publication, the proclamation has first to be 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.

14. The provisions of Section 82 of the Code of Criminal Procedure having serious ramifications *qua* the right of the accused concerning his presence in the criminal trial proceedings ought not and cannot be invoked in casual and cavalier manner. The requirement of recording of satisfaction, that the accused has absconded or is concealing himself so that warrant of his arrest cannot be executed, as embodied in Section 82 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, is to be scrupulously complied with, based on relevant material available on record of the case in that regard. Non-adherence to said requirement while declaring the accused as proclaimed offender vitiates the proclamation proceedings initiated against the accused.



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12. Hence, no useful purpose would be served by keeping the criminal proceedings pending against the petitioner particularly when the petitioner has already joined the investigation and has cooperated and hence it would be an appropriate case for exercise of powers under Section 482 of Cr.P.C. and to bring to an end the criminal proceedings initiated in the light of the FIR *ibid* against the petitioner.

13. In view of the above findings, in the entirety of facts and circumstances of the present case, the present petition is allowed and the order dated 24.12.2024 (Annexure P-9), passed by the learned Judicial Magistrate, 1st Class, Samrala in case CIS No. CHI-145/2016 titled as State vs. Manoj Kumar Jha in FIR No.51 dated 05.03.2015 registered under Sections 419, 420, 506 of IPC at Police Station Samrala, Police District Khanna, District Ludhiana whereby the petitioner was declared proclaimed offender is quashed subject to petitioner appearing before the trial/concerned Court on or before 11.09.2025. In case of default at the end of the petitioner, the present petition shall be deemed to be dismissed.

14. Pending application(s), if any, shall also stand disposed of accordingly.

(SUMEET GOEL)
JUDGE

August 25, 2025

Ajay

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

