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IN THE HIGH COURT OF DELHI AT NEW DELHI

CRL.L.P. 490/2022

PANKAJ MAINI

.....Petitioner

Through: Ms. Nikhat Parveen, Adv.
through V.C.

versus

KUSHMANDA OVERSEAS

.....Respondent

Through: Mr. Shreyas Malik, Adv
for R-2 & R-3.

CORAM:

HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE AMIT MAHAJAN

ORDER

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24.07.2025

1. The present leave to appeal is filed under Section 378 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 ('CrPC') against the judgment dated 07.07.2022, passed by the learned Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate ('ACMM'), East District, Karkardooma Courts, Delhi, whereby the respondent was acquitted of the offence under Section 138 of the Negotiable Instruments Act, 1881 ('NI Act') in CC No. 47200/2016.

2. At the outset, the learned counsel for the petitioner states that in view of the judgment of the Hon'ble Apex Court in the case of ***Celestium Financial v. A. Gnanasekaran* : 2025 SCC OnLine SC 1320**, the petitioner being a victim is entitled to file an appeal against the judgment of acquittal and is not required to seek leave to appeal. He submits that the present petition be transferred to the learned Court of Sessions to be treated as an appeal.

3. The Hon'ble Apex Court in the recent decision in ***Celestium Financial v. A. Gnanasekaran* (supra)** has opined that a complainant who prefers a complaint under Section 138 of the NI Act is an aggrieved party who suffers economic loss due to the dishonour of cheque, and such a complainant qualifies as a victim within the meaning of Section 2(wa) of the CrPC.



Consequently, it was held that such a complainant is entitled to the benefit of the proviso of Section 372 of the CrPC, enabling them to maintain an appeal against an order of acquittal without seeking leave to appeal under Section 378(4) of the CrPC.

4. The petitioner was the complainant in the complaint preferred under Section 138 of the NI Act, and is thus entitled to maintain an appeal under Section 372 of the CrPC.

5. In terms of the proviso to Section 372 of the CrPC, an appeal by a victim against the judgment of acquittal passed by the learned MM will have to be heard by the learned Court of Sessions. If the petition is allowed to continue before this Court, the parties will stand to lose a forum of challenge.

6. In view of the above, the present matter is disposed of with direction that the present petition be treated as an appeal under the proviso to Section 372 of the CrPC and numbered accordingly.

7. The Registry is directed to transfer entire record of the case, to the concerned appellate Court of Sessions.

8. The order be communicated to the learned Principal District & Sessions Judge, East District, Karkardooma Courts, Delhi, for compliance and listing before the concerned Appellate Court on 26.08.2025.

9. The parties are directed to appear before the concerned Appellate Court on 26.08.2025.

10. Considering that the matter has been pending before this Court since the year 2022, the learned Sessions Court is requested to dispose of the matter expeditiously.

AMIT MAHAJAN, J

JULY 24, 2025/“SK”