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* **IN THE HIGH COURT OF DELHI AT NEW DELHI**

+ CRL.L.P. 157/2020 & CRL.M.A. 3619/2020

SATPAL SINGH BAKSHI

.....Petitioner

Through: Mr. Sunil Lalwani, Advocate

versus

M/S. ASIAN CONSUMER PRODUCTS LTD. & ANR.

.....Respondents

Through: Mr. Bhupesh Narula, Mr. Anugrah
Ekka, Mr. Kanishk Taneja, Advocates

CORAM:

HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE SANJEEV NARULA

ORDER

07.08.2025

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1. The present leave to appeal under Section 378 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973¹ assails the judgment dated 05th July, 2018 passed by the Metropolitan Magistrate (NI Act) Central District, Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi in C.C. No. 529126/2016 titled “*Satpal Bakshi v. M/s Asian Consumer Products Ltd. & Anr.*” whereby the Respondents have been acquitted of the offence under Section 138 of the Negotiable Instruments Act, 1881². It is noted the Appellant had first approached the Sessions Court in appeal, assailing the impugned order, however, the same was dismissed as withdrawn since it was held that an appeal against acquittal in a case under Section 138 of the NI Act would only lie before the High Court. As such, the Appellant filed the present leave to appeal.

¹ “Cr.P.C.”



2. At the outset, counsel for the Appellant seeks transfer of the present petition to the Court of Sessions and that the same be treated as an appeal, in light of the recent decision of the Supreme Court in ***Celestium Financial v. A. Gnanasekaran***³.

3. In the said decision, the Supreme Court clarified the legal position regarding appeals against acquittals under Section 138 of NI Act and held that a complainant under Section 138, who suffers financial loss due to the dishonour of a cheque, qualifies as a ‘victim’ under Section 2(wa) of Cr.P.C. Therefore, the Court ruled that such a complainant is entitled to benefit from the proviso to Section 372 of the Cr.P.C., to prefer an appeal against acquittal without having the need to obtain leave under Section 378(4) of the Cr.P.C.

4. In light of the Supreme Court’s recent clarification of the legal position, it is now evident that the Appellant, being a complainant under Section 138 of NI Act, is entitled to file an appeal against the impugned judgment of acquittal under Section 413 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023⁴ (previously Section 372 of the Cr.P.C.) before the Sessions Court. If this Court were to proceed to hear and allow the present leave to appeal at this stage, it could deprive the parties of an available forum for further challenge.

5. In light of the above, it is deemed fit to direct that the present petition be transferred to the concerned Appellate Court of Sessions and be considered as an appeal under the proviso to Section 413 of BNSS. Let the appeal be numbered accordingly.

² “NI Act”

³ 2025



6. The entire record of the present case, including the requisitioned copy of the Trial Court Record, is directed to be transferred to the concerned Appellate Court of Sessions.
7. Furthermore, considering that the leave to appeal has been pending for a considerable time, the concerned Sessions Court is requested to dispose of the matter as expeditiously as possible.
8. Parties are directed to appear before the Appellate Court of Sessions on 22nd August, 2025.
9. A copy of the order be sent to the concerned Principal District and Sessions Judge for necessary information, compliance and for listing of the matter before the concerned Appellate Court on 22nd August, 2025.

SANJEEV NARULA, J

AUGUST 7, 2025/ab