GAHC040017292026

THE GAUHATI HIGH COURT
(HIGH COURT OF ASSAM, NAGALAND, MIZORAM AND ARUNACHAL PRADESH)
(ITANAGAR BENCH)

Case No. : Crl.Petn./333/2026

Smti Yari Nabam and 9 Ors
Wife of Shri Takam Nabam, resident of Village Mobuso-I, PO and PS Seijosa, Pakke Kessang District, Arunachal Pradesh.

2: Nama Nabam
Age:
Occupation :
Son of Late Pile Nabam
resident of Village Mobuso-I
PO and PS Seijosa
Pakke Kessang District
Arunachal Pradesh.

3: Vergosh Nabam
Age:
Occupation :
Son of Shri Takam Nabam
resident of Village Mobuso-I
PO and PS Seijosa
Pakke Kessang District
Arunachal Pradesh.

4: Petrus Nabam
Age:
Occupation :
Son of Shri Nama Nabam
resident of Village Mobuso-I
PO and PS Seijosa
Pakke Kessang District
Arunachal Pradesh.

5: Jerom Nabam
Age:

Occupation :
Son of Shri Takam Nabam
resident of Village Mobuso-I
PO and PS Seijosa
Pakke Kessang District
Arunachal Pradesh.

6: Smti Suman Beniwal
Age:
Occupation :
Daughter of Shri Jainarayan Beniwal
resident of Ward No.1
New Civil Line
Hanumangarh
Rajasthan
presently posted as Divisional Forest Officer
Khellong Forest Division
Bomdila
PO and PS Bomdila
West Kameng District
Arunachal Pradesh

7: Smti Mopin Ete
Age:
Occupation :
Daughter of Shri Kago Ete
resident of Village Darka
PO and PS Aalo
West Siang District
Arunachal Pradesh and presently posted as Range Forest Officer
Seijosa Forest Range
Pakke Kessang District
Arunachal Pradesh.

8: Lungsa Lapung
Age:
Occupation :
Son of Late Tagia Lapung
resident of Village Lapung
PO and PS Seppa
East Kameng District
Arunachal Pradesh and presently posted as Personal Security Officer to the Divisional Forest Officer
Khellong Forest Division
Bomdila.

9: Ponglay Wangpan
Age:

Occupation :
Son of Late Alluwas Wangpan
resident of Village Pumao
PO and PS Pumao
Longding District
Arunachal Pradesh and presently posted as Driver to the Divisional Forest Officer
Khellong Forest Division.

10: Smti Fridy Lego
Age:
Occupation :
Daughter of Shri Maklek Lego
resident of Village Remi
PO and PS Dambuk
Lower Dibang Valley District
Arunachal Pradesh and presently posted as Forest Guard
Seijosa Forest Range
Pakke Kessang District
Arunachal Pradesh

VERSUS

The State of AP
represented by the PP of AP

Advocate for the Petitioner : Rajesh Sonar, Kipa Tagar,Gautam Natung,Meenakshi Jerang,Michi Khambo,M Basar,Binny Nyaruce

Advocate for the Respondent : P P of AP,

B E F O R E

HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE SANJEEV KUMAR SHARMA

ORDER

20.11.2026

Heard Mr. Rajesh Sonar, learned counsel for the petitioners. Also heard Ms. Topi Jini, learned Addl. Public Prosecutor for the State of Arunachal Pradesh.

2. The present Criminal Petition under Section 528 of the Bhartiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 (hereinafter "BNSS"), invoking the inherent jurisdiction

of this Hon'ble Court, is jointly preferred by the accused persons and by the informants who are all the alleged victims of the occurrence, for quashing the FIR dated 12.02.2023 registered as Seijosa Police Station Case No. 01/2026, Charge-sheet No. 02/2026 dated 10.04.2026, and the consequent G.R. Case No. 30/2026 pending trial before the learned Chief Judicial Magistrate-cum-Civil Judge (Senior Division), Seppa, on the basis of the voluntary Deed of Mutual Settlement Agreement dated 07.08.2026, whereby all disputes and differences between the parties stand finally and amicably resolved.

3. It is submitted that the petitioner Nos. 1 to 5 are the accused persons sent up for trial in the aforesaid charge-sheet, whereas petitioner Nos. 6 to 10 are the informants and the de facto complainants, against whom the offences are alleged to have been committed. Every person directly aggrieved by the occurrence is thus before this Court as a co-petitioner, and all of them jointly pray for quashing of the proceedings.

4. It is further submitted that the petitioner Smti. Yari Nabam is a lady, a senior citizen aged about 64 years, is the wife of Sh. Takam Nabam, the owner of the building in question, and the mother of petitioner Nos. 3 & 5. Petitioner No. 2, Sh. Nama Nabam, a senior citizen aged about 63 years and a respected elder of the locality, is the father of petitioner No. 4. Petitioner No. 3, Sh.

Vergosh Nabam, is a practicing Advocate. Petitioner Nos. 1 to 5 have no criminal antecedents whatsoever, and no other criminal case is pending against any of them. They all are the permanent residents of Village Mobuso-I, Seijosa, Pakke Kessang District, and belong to the Nyishi community, a recognized Scheduled Tribe of Arunachal Pradesh.

5. An FIR was lodged on 12.02.2026, before Seijosa Police Station, Pakke Kessang District, by the informant along with other Forest Officials, alleging, inter alia that on 11.12.2026, while proceeding towards NEC road, Seijosa, on the basis of credible an information regarding illegal smuggling of timber, the DFO, namely Ms. Suman Beniwal, accompanied by her PSO, the driver noticed A-grade bamboo and wooden planks lying at an under-construction building near the ADC office, Seijosa; that on enquiry, workers present at the site failed to disclose the source of the timber and bamboo; that the DFO informed Ms. Mopin Ete, RFO, Seijosa and collected the forest produced lying in the site; that in the meantime, the DFO received a call from the DFO, Pakke Tiger Reserve, stating that Shri. Takam Nabam had approached him and claimed ownership of the building and requested the materials not to be taken; that aforesaid Takam Nabam was informed that removal of bamboo from Reserved Forest without payment of royalty is impermissible and removal of timber from Reserved Forest is a punishable offence under Assam Forest Regulation, 1891, that he agreed to

pay the royalty to the Government in due course and thus, the DFO, the petitioner and the team left the forest produces at the location; that thereafter, when the DFO, the petitioner and the team proceeded to continue their official duty towards NEC road to act upon the input of illegal timber removal, 4-5 vehicles, led by Shri. Patroce Nabam and Shri. Jairam Nabam intercepted their vehicle and wrongfully restrained the DFO, the petitioner and the team, that a mob of about 30-50 persons gathered and allegedly assaulted the DFO and her staff, that the PSO was attacked and his mobile phone was snatched while recording the incident, that Smt. Yari Nabam and others also allegedly assaulted the DFO and her team and the vehicle keys were forcibly taken, that due to obstruction and assault, the DFO, the petitioner and their team were prevented from proceeding to NEC road to discharge their official duties. In view of the aforesaid, having no alternative, the DFO and other Forest staffs lodged an FIR before Seijosa police station.

6. On receipt of the FIR dated 12.02.2026, Seijosa P.S. Case No. 01/2026, under Section 126(2)/74/132/189(2)/324(3) and 351(2) of the BNS, 2023, was registered.

7. A counter-FIR was also lodged by one of the petitioners, Yari Nabam, against the DFO and other Gorest officials, in respect of the same incident,

which was registered under Section 329(2) of the BNS, whereupon Seijosa P.S. Case No. 02/ 2026 was registered on 25.02.2026 under Section 329(2) BNS.

8. After completion of investigation in Seijosa P.S. Case No. 01/2026, the I.O. submitted the charge-sheet against the petitioners No. 1 to 5 under Sections 74, 126(2), 132, 189(2), 324(3), and 351(2) BNS. Different sections have been invoked against different petitioners.

9. It is submitted that it was only Petitioner No. 1 who allegedly physically assaulted Petitioner No. 6 and threw a stone at the Government vehicle. Petitioner Nos. 2, 3 and 5 are alleged to have been involved in nothing more than a verbal argument. Petitioner No. 4 is stated to have acted merely as a mediator between the disputing parties.

10. It is also submitted that despite these findings, the petitioner Nos. 3 and 5 have been charge-sheeted under Sections 74 and 132 of the BNS, and petitioner No. 2, under Section 132 of the BNS, and the charge-sheet does not attribute to any act of assault or use of criminal force, which is an essential ingredient of both the offences.

11. It is further submitted that there is no allegation that any such assault was

committed upon the informant/DFO with an intention to outrage her modesty, or knowledge that the act is likely to outrage her modesty. Furthermore, Section 132 of the BNS as well as Section 189(2) of the BNS are not attracted in the facts of the present case.

12. Be that as it may, it is submitted that in view of the settlement and compromise arrived at between the parties, this Court, having regard to the nature of the offences/nature of the allegations, may quash the criminal proceedings in exercise of its inherent powers.

13. Learned Addl. Public Prosecutor submits that he has no objection if the prayer, jointly made by the informant and accused side, is allowed by the Court.

14. The Hon'ble Apex Court, in State of *Madhya Pradesh vs. Lakshmi Narayan & Ors., (2019) 5 SCC 688* has held that criminal proceedings in respect of non-compoundable offences can be quashed if they are of a private nature and not a serious threat to society and the parties have resolved the dispute among themselves. Further, in *Gian Singh Vs. State of Punjab & Anr., (2012) 10 SCC 303*, the Apex Court has held that the inherent power of the High Court is to be exercised to prevent the abuse of the process of the Court. It would also be in the domain of the High Court to exercise its inherent power when there

appears to be a bleak possibility of conviction or that the chances of a conviction are remote in view of the compromise affected between the parties. In the said decision the Hon'ble Apex Court has held as follows:

> "*48. A five-Judge Bench of the Punjab and Haryana High Court in Kulwinder Singh v. State of Punjab was called upon to determine, inter alia, the question whether the High Court has the power under Section 482 of the Code to quash the criminal proceedings or allow the compounding of the offences in the cases which have been specified as non-compoundable offences under the provisions of Section 320 of the Code. The five-Judge Bench referred to quite a few decisions of this Court including the decisions in Madhu Limaye, Bhajan Lal, L. Muniswamy, Simrikhia, B.S. Joshi and Ram Lal and framed the following guidelines: (Kulwinder Singh case, CTC pp. 783-84, para 21)*
>
> *"21. ... '(a) Cases arising from matrimonial discord, even if other offences are introduced for aggravation of the case.*
>
> *(b) Cases pertaining to property disputes between close relations, which are predominantly civil in nature and they have a genuine or belaboured dimension of criminal liability. Notwithstanding a touch of criminal liability, the settlement would bring lasting peace and harmony to larger number of people.*
>
> *(c) Cases of dispute between old partners or business concerns with dealings over a long period which are predominantly civil*

and are given or acquire a criminal dimension but the parties are essentially seeking a redressal of their financial or commercial claim.

(d) Minor offences as under Section 279 1PC may be permitted to be compounded on the basis of legitimate settlement between the parties. Yet another offence which remains non-compoundable is Section 506(11) IPC, which is punishable with 7 years imprisonment. It is the judicial experience that an offence under Section 506 IPC in most cases is based on the oral declaration with different shades of intention. Another set of offences, which ought to be liberally compounded, are Sections 147 and 148 IPC, more particularly where other offences are compoundable. It may be added here that the State of Madhya Pradesh vide M.P. Act 17 of 1999 (Section 3) has made Sections 506(11) IPC, 147 IPC and 148 IPC compoundable offences by amending the schedule under Section 320 CrPC.

(e) The offences against human body other than murder and culpable homicide where the victim dies in the course of transaction would fall in the category where compounding may not be permitted. Heinous offences like highway robbery, dacoity or a case involving clear-cut allegations of rape should also fall in the prohibited category. Offences committed by public servants purporting to act in that capacity as also offences against public servant while the victims are acting in

the discharge of their duty must remain non-compoundable. Offences against the State enshrined in Chapter VII (relating to army, navy and air force) must remain non-compoundable.

(f) That as a broad guideline the offences against human body other than murder and culpable homicide may be permitted to be compounded when the court is in the position to record a finding that the settlement between the parties is voluntary and fair.

While parting with this part, it appears necessary to add that the settlement or compromise must satisfy the conscience of the court. The settlement must be just and fair besides being free from the undue pressure, the court must examine the cases of weaker and vulnerable victims with necessary caution."

To conclude, it can safely be said that there can never be any hard and fast category which can be prescribed to enable the court to exercise its power under Section 482 CrPC. The only principle that can be laid down is the one which has been incorporated in the section itself i.e. 'to prevent abuse of the process of any court' or 'to secure the ends of justice'."

"*50. A three-Judge Bench of the Bombay High Court in Abasaheb Yadav Honmane v. State of Maharashtra dealt with the inherent power of the High Court under Section 482 of the Code vis-à-vis the express bar for compounding of the non-compoundable offences in Section 320 (9) of the Code. The High Court referred to various decisions of this*

Court and also the decisions of the various High Courts and then stated as follows: (Mah LJ pp. 904-05, para 14)

> *"14. The power of compounding on one hand and quashing of criminal proceedings in exercise of inherent powers on the other, are incapable of being treated as synonymous or even interchangeable in law. The conditions precedent and satisfaction of criteria in each of these cases are distinct and different. May be, the only aspect where they have any commonality is the result of exercise of such power in favour of the accused, as acquittal is the end result in both these cases. Both these powers are to be exercised for valid grounds and with some element of objectivity. Particularly, the power of quashing the FIR or criminal proceedings by the court by taking recourse to inherent powers is expected to be used sparingly and that too without losing sight of impact of such order on the criminal justice delivery system. It may be obligatory upon the court to strike a balance between the nature of the offence and the need to pass an order in exercise of inherent powers, as the object of criminal law is protection of public by maintenance of law and order."*

"*51. Section 320 of the Code articulates public policy with regard to the compounding of offences. It catalogues the offences punishable under IPC which may be compounded by the parties without permission of the court and the composition of certain offences with the permission of the court. The offences punishable under the special statutes are*

not covered by Section 320. When an offence is compoundable under Section 320, abatement of such offence or an attempt to commit such offence or where the accused is liable under Section 34 or 149 IPC can also be compounded in the same manner. A person who is under 18 years of age or is an idiot or a lunatic is not competent to contract compounding of offence but the same can be done on his behalf with the permission of the court. If a person is otherwise competent to compound an offence is dead, his legal representatives may also compound the offence with the permission of the court. Where the accused has been committed for trial or he has been convicted and the appeal is pending, composition can only be done with the leave of the court to which he has been committed or with the leave of the appeal court, as the case may be. The Revisional Court is also competent to allow any person to compound any offence who is competent to compound. The consequence of the composition of an offence is acquittal of the accused. Sub-section (9) of Section 320 mandates that no offence shall be compounded except as provided by this section. Obviously, in view thereof the composition of an offence has to be in accord with Section 320 and in no other manner."

"*57. Quashing of offence or criminal proceedings on the ground of settlement between an offender and victim is not the same thing as compounding of offence. They are different and not interchangeable. Strictly speaking, the power of compounding of offences given to a court under Section 320 is materially different from the quashing of criminal proceedings by the High Court in exercise of its inherent jurisdiction. In compounding of offences, power of a criminal court is*

circumscribed by the provisions contained in Section 320 and the court is guided solely and squarely thereby while, on the other hand, the formation of opinion by the High Court for quashing a criminal offence or criminal proceeding or criminal complaint is guided by the material on record as to whether the ends of justice would justify such exercise of power although the ultimate consequence may be acquittal or dismissal of indictment."

"*58. Where the High Court quashes a criminal proceeding having regard to the fact that the dispute between the offender and the victim has been settled although the offences are not compoundable, it does so as in its opinion, continuation of criminal proceedings will be an exercise in futility and justice in the case demands that the dispute between the parties is put to an end and peace is restored; securing the ends of justice being the ultimate guiding factor. No doubt, crimes are acts which have harmful effect on the public and consist in wrongdoing that seriously endangers and threatens the well-being of the society and it is not safe to leave the crime-doer only because he and the victim have settled the dispute amicably or that the victim has been paid compensation, yet certain crimes have been made compoundable in law, with or without the permission of the court. In respect of serious offences like murder, rape, dacoity, etc., or other offences of mental depravity under IPC or offences of moral turpitude under special statutes, like the Prevention of Corruption Act or the offences committed by public servants while working in that capacity, the settlement between the offender and the victim can have no legal sanction at all. However, certain offences which overwhelmingly and*

predominantly bear civil flavour having arisen out of civil, mercantile, commercial, financial, partnership or such like transactions or the offences arising out of matrimony, particularly relating to dowry, etc. or the family dispute, where the wrong is basically to the victim and the offender and the victim have settled all disputes between them amicably, irrespective of the fact that such offences have not been made compoundable, the High Court may within the framework of its inherent power, quash the criminal proceeding or criminal complaint or FIR if it is satisfied that on the face of such settlement, there is hardly any likelihood of the offender being convicted and by not quashing the criminal proceedings, justice shall be casualty and ends of justice shall be defeated. The above list is illustrative and not exhaustive. Each case will depend on its own facts and no hard-and-fast category can be prescribed."

15. In a similar manner, the Hon'ble Supreme Court in the case of *Parbatbhai Aahir @ Parbatbhai Bhimsinhbhai Karmur and Ors., Vs. The State of Gujarat & Anr.*, reported in *2017 (9) SCC 641*, as well as in the case of *Laxmi Narayan (supra)*, reitereated the principles laid down in the aforesaid cases of *Gian Singh (supra) and Narinder Singh (supra)*.

16. Having regard to the law laid down by the Hon'ble Apex Court as above, as well as the nature of the allegations, and considered along with the material available on the record, this Court is of the view that the continuance of the

criminal proceedings would amount to an abuse of the process of the Court, as no fruitful outcome is to be expected by such continuance in view of the stand taken by the informant side.

17. Further, considering the fact that the prosecution also has no objection to the prayer for quashing, the impugned proceedings in G.R. Case No. 30/2026 pending in the learned Chief Magistrate-cum-Civil Judge (Senior Division), Seppa, are hereby stands quashed.

18. The petition stands allowed.

JUDGE

Comparing Assistant