IN THE HIGH COURT AT CALCUTTA
CRIMINAL APPELLATE JURISDICTION
APPELLATE SIDE

Present:

The Hon'ble Justice Ananya Bandyopadhyay

C.R.A. 133 of 1994

Dulal Chandra Ruhidas
-Vs-
C.B.I.

For the Appellant : Ms. Trina Mitra

For the State : Ms. Faria Hossain
Mr. Anand Keshari

For the C.B.I. : Mr. Amajit De

Judgment on : 30.03.2026

Ananya Bandyopadhyay, J.:-

1. This appeal is preferred against judgment and order dated 22.04.1994 passed by the Learned Additional Sessions Judge, 2nd Court, North 24 Parganas in G.R. Case No.78/89, Sessions Case No.11(9)90 and Sessions Trial No.5(1)91, thereby, the appellant was convicted under Sections 489(C) and 489(D) of the Indian Penal Code and sentenced to suffer rigorous imprisonment for a period of 4 years and to pay a fine of Rs.1000/- in default to suffer further rigorous imprisonment for 3 months for the offence under Section 489(C) of the Indian Penal Code and sentenced to suffer rigorous imprisonment for 5 years and to pay a fine of Rs.2000/- in default to suffer further imprisonment for 6 months for the offence under Section

489(D) of the Indian Penal Code and both the sentenced were run concurrently.

2. The prosecution case precisely stated an information was received from a reliable source at the Office of the C.B.I. that the appellant along with other villagers of Boirmari under Minakhan P.S., North 24 Parganas, was engaged in manufacturing forged/counterfeit Governmental Currency Note of 100 rupee denominations and circulating the same to different parts of the State with the assistance of his associates. Accordingly, the complainant along with Shri A. K. Biswas, Inspector Shri K. C. Sen, Sub-Inspector Ravi Gamuir and others proceeded to verify the information. At about 11:15 hrs., the team reached Malancha Bazar and on enquiry it was learnt by complainant that the appellant had proceeded towards the Ferry Ghat about half an hour ago. The complainant and others immediately proceeded towards Ferry Ghat and found the person of similar description according to the information received by them. The complainant apprehended the appellant and forged counterfeit currency note of 100 rupee denominators were recovered from his possession.

   On further enquiry, the complainant stated instruments for manufacturing such lodged notes were detected at his resident and the notes were manufactured there. The appellant let the raiding team to his house where from 214 pieces of forged currency note of 100 rupee denominations, unfinished note paper, locks and other instrument were recovered.

3. After completion of the investigation a charge-sheet was submitted by the investigating officer against the appellant on 18.12.1989.

4. On 14.01.1991 charges were framed against the appellant under Section 498(C)/498(d) of the Indian Penal Code to which he pleaded not guilty and claim to be tried.
5. In order to prove its case, the prosecution examined as many as 9 witnesses and exhibited certain documents.
6. Perused and considered the submissions of the Learned Advocates representing the appellant as well as the State as it transpired from the written evidence as well as oral.
7. A circumspection of evidence of the prosecution witnesses revealed as follows:-
   i. PW-1 deposed he was a director of inspection, Govt. of India. On 19.01.1989 he accompanied with C.B.I., officers at 08:45/09:00 a.m., to Malancha Bazar Ferri Ghat. The C.B.I. officers suspected one of them who were standing nearby Ferri Ghat. On apprehension the man became nervous and was brought inside their car. The spot where the man was standing would be intervened by 10/15 houses from the Ferri Ghat. Mr. R.B. Bose, Shri Ajay Biswas were amongst the C.B.I. officer were present at the spot. On search, 50 notes of 100 rupees of denomination were recovered from the left lower pocket from the appellant's shirt. No other outsiders were present during search excepting raiding party. They suspected the notes to be forged one and as such the notes were seized under a seizure list, which was marked as Exbt.-I collectively. Pursuant to the statements in response to their interrogation, the appellant was taken to his house. In his house, on identification of the appellant's room was searched and forging materials were found scattered. They prepared

another seizure list, which was marked as Exbt.-2/1. Another 12 notes, suspected to be forged, recovered from the house of appellant which were marked as Exbt.-III collectively. Two bunches of notes were recovered from the house of appellant, seized under a seizure list, were marked as Exbt.-IV collectively and Exbt.-V collectively respectively. Another print of forged notes of 100 rupees denomination and seven plates seized from the house of the appellant which were marked as Exbt.-VII collectively and Exbt.-VIII collectively respectively. The packet and the envelope containing chemical ink were recovered from the house of appellant, marked as Exbt.-X collectively and Exbt.-XI respectively. Another packet of ink and 'pieces of papers in cut condition' also recovered from the house of appellant were marked as Exbt.-XII and Exbt.-XIII respectively. The 11 tin containers with lid and another container without lid recovered from the house of the appellant were marked as Exbt.-XIII collectively and Exbt.-XIV/1 respectively. The plastic container, one wooden piece with a tin lid, two broken pieces of slates and three pieces of sand papers kept in a bundle were recovered from the house of the appellant which were marked as Exbt.-XV, Exbt.-XVI, Exbt.-XVII and Exbt.-XVIII respectively. The memorandum prepared and signed by Mr. R.B. Bose, was marked as Exbt.-3/1. The notes were recovered from the house of the appellant were all of 100 rupees denomination.

ii. During cross-examination PW-1 stated that a day before 19.01.1989, he was informed in writing by the Assistant Director (Administration) that the raid would be held on 19.01.1989. A letter from C.B.I., wherefrom he learnt the proposed raid in which he was to take part had been given to the I.O. of that case in course of the investigation. In pursuance of that letter, he went to C.B.I. office on 19.01.1989 at 07:30/08:00 a.m. and met Mr. R.B. Bose at Nizam Palace. He saw 3/4 persons but he could not name them.

He did not belong to the C.B.I. but to a distinct and different office being the Directorate of Inspector, Government of India. Sri B.C. Saha was the Assistant Director who gave him the letter. He was attached to P.R.O. Department of the Directorate of Inspection.

iii. PW-2 deposed he was employed under Director of Inspection, Govt. of India. On 19.01.89 at about 08:30 a.m., he accompanied C.B.I. officers and PW-1 to Malancha Ferri Ghat for working out a secret information and observed formalities of search. Near Ferri Ghat, they scattered themselves. The C.B.I., officers suspected one person i.e. the appellant who became nervous and attempted to place his hand inside his left pocket of his wearing shirt. The packet was found to contain forged currency notes 50 in number of 100 rupees denomination which was seized under a seizure list and marked as Exbt.-1/2.

On interrogation, the appellant made certain statement leading to discovery of further articles. In the house of the appellant, certain articles were recovered, which were seized and marked as Exbt.-2/2. The memorandum contained his signature which was marked as Exbt.-3/2. The seized notes recovered at ferri ghat, which was marked as Exbt.-I collectively. The rest of the articles recovered from the house of the appellant identified all the material Exbt.-II to Exbt.-XVIII and Exbt.-XX to Exbt.-XII. The mat recovered from the house of the appellant was marked as Exbt.-XXIII.

iv. During his cross-examination PW-2 stated that he was an upper division clerk at the directorate of inspector, in the accounts section. At the relevant time Sri Chittatosh Bhowmick was the Superintendent of the office he belonged to. Possibly a day before the date of raid he got a letter from the Vigilance section of his office with intimation that he was to attend the C.B.I. office. The relevant date was mentioned in the letter and he called the C.B.I. office on the same day.

He did not notice any other person at the Ferri Ghat at the time of apprehension of the appellant. The seizure list was prepared near the vehicle and at that time no other person came there.

v. PW-3 deposed he was attached to the office of S.P., C.B.I., S.C.B., Calcutta, Govt. of India as an Inspector of Police. On 19.01.89 at about 08:40 a.m., he along with others C.B.I. officers and two independent witnesses (PW-1 and PW-2) reached Malancha within Minakhan P.S., the spot was Malancha Ferrighat. At the spot, they scattered themselves, he found R.B. Bose to arrive with the appellant and on search 50 pieces of 100 rupees denomination notes were recovered from left pocket of the shirt of the appellant. Search and seizure at ferrighat was held in his presence, which were marked as Mat. Exbt.-I to Mat. Exbt.-XIX. Mr. R.B. Bose, the I.O. prepared the seizure list in the house of the appellant and seized articles mentioned there. The entire search and seizure was conducted in his presence.

vi. During his cross-examination PW-3 stated that he was to accompany the raiding party on 19.01.1989. He maintained a personal diary for official works. He did not produce the diary to the I.O.

vii. PW-4 deposed he was a Metropolitan Magistrate. On 28.01.89 he was posted at Basirhat as J.M. and the appellant was produced by one Constable No.782 Sri S. Kar. On 27.01.89 the appellant was produced first and was kept under segregation and he was directed to be produced on 28.01.89 at 01:30 p.m. After giving due caution, he recorded his statement on 28.01.89 under Section 164 Code of Criminal Procedure. The recording, written and signed by him, the appellant put his left thumb impression. He appended one certificate under the recording. The recorded statement was marked as Exbt.-4.

viii. During his cross-examination PW-4 stated that there was no specific notice that the appellant would be kept under segregation and would be produced on the next day. There was no question framed by him whether the appellant was making statement under any promise or under any threat on compulsion. No question was raised by him as to whether the appellant was assaulted after his arrest and before his production. The appellant was identified by the Constable on the first day. He did not note any time in the statement. The statement was recorded inside his chamber. There was no note that any outsider was present inside his chamber at the time of recorded.

ix. PW-5 deposed on 19.01.89 he was attached as S.I. to Special Crime Branch, C.B.I., Nizam Palace, Calcutta. On that day, he accompanied a raiding party at Malancha Bazar along with officers of the C.B.I. The place was near ferry ghat. At the spot he was directed to keep watch on any suspected movement. At about 11:30 a.m., they found inspector Mr. R.B. Bose caught hold of a person who was trying to hide something in his left lower pocket of his wearing shirt. Thereafter, on search 50 notes of 100 rupees denomination were recovered from the left side of the lower pocket of the appellant. Inspector R.B. Bose seized the articles under a seizure list which was marked as Exbt.-3/4. The notes and shirt were seized from the appellant, which were marked as Exbt.-I and Exbt.-XIX. The articles recovered and seized from the house of the appellant, were marked as Exbt.-II to Exbt.-XVIII except Exbt.-IX and Exbt.-XX to Exbt.-XXIII excepting Exbt.-XXII. Exbt-XXII was also recovered from the house of the appellant.

x. During his cross-examination PW-5 stated that he did not have any document to show that he had been to the ferrighat on 19.01.89. When any information received by him it was entered into the general diary. At the time of the arrest on ferrighat possibly no local person was present or might be 2/3 persons were present, he did not remember. He also stated that he did not remember whether any local person was present at the time of the search.

xi. PW-6 deposed on 19.01.89 he was posted as S.I. of police attached to C.B.I. (S.C.B.), Calcutta. On that day for working out information he accompanied with a raid party at Malancha Bazar with others C.B.I. officers. Two independent witnesses also accompanied them. He was all along with Inspector, R.B. Bose at ferrighat where Shri Bose challenged one person i.e. the appellant. The members of the raid party assembled at the spot and the appellant became nervous and pulled out a packet from his left side lower pocket of the shirt. The packet was found to contain 50 pieces of forged currency notes of 100 rupees denomination. Before the appellant pulled out the packet from his pocket, Mr. R.B. Bose caught the hand of the appellant. A search list was prepared at the spot near ferrighat by R.B. Bose where witnesses signed. The seizure list was marked "X" for identification. The articles seized at ferrighat, were marked as Exbt.-I and Exbt.-XIX. On search forged currency notes, forging instruments, ink, pad etc., were recovered and seized under a seizure list. The memorandum prepared by Mr. R.B. Bose, was attested by him, marked as Exbt.-3/5. All the articles recovered from the house of the appellant, were identified as Exbt.-II to Exbt.-XVIII excepting Exbt.-IX and Exbt.-XX to Exbt.-XIII. Mat. Exbt.-II was the roller and Mat. Exbt.-VIII collectively was the block.

xii. During the cross-examination PW-6 stated he had retired from service. S.P., gave him verbal direction on the previous might to report on the office on 19.01.89 for special work. During his service his normal duty hour from 10:00 a.m., to 06:30 p.m. He would have to note his attendance and departure time on the office. He met first the Inspector R.B. Bose on the office. When the raiding party went to the house of the appellant for search, many local persons were present inside the gate. 2/4 persons were present when the seizure list was being prepared at the house. Beside memorandum, his personal diary proved his presence at Malancha Bazar on 19.01.89.

xiii. PW-7 deposed he works as a manager, currency note press for examining forged currency note. He examined the monetary paper notes which were referred to S.P., C.B.I., (SPI Crime Branch), Calcutta and submitted report, which was marked as Exbt.-5/5a. The referred currency notes were received. The packet containing some blank papers were seen and signed by him which were marked as Mat. Exbt.-VII collectively. He marked it as item no.F and had been accordingly referred to in his report. A packet containing 101 forged paper notes of Rs.100/- denomination were marked and sealed by him with his signature, for examination. It was related to his report in item no.2 and marked as Mat. Exbt.-V. That was 7 sealed signature and marked as Exbt.-6/a.

Another bundle containing 50 forged currency money of denomination of Rs.100/- was received and marked as item no.1 in his report and examined by him which was identified Mat. Exbt.-I. Another bundle containing 11 forged currency notes of Rs.100/- denomination each was received by him and marked as item no.3 in his report and examined by him which was previously identified Mat. Exbt.-III. The packet containing 17 forged currency notes of Rs.100/- denomination printed on one side only without any number on the notes, was received and sealed and signed by him and examined by him. It was marked as Sl. No.5 in his report. The sealed signature was marked as Exbt.-6/D.

He mentioned in his report, the number of the packets with serial and not item. Item no.F related to Sl. No.6 of his report. The hand notes were received and marked by him as Sl. No.8 in his report (identified Mat. Exbt.-III). It was sealed and signed and examined by him. The bundle containing 8 metallic black for Rs.100/- denomination each was received and examined by him. Those were marked as Sl. No.7 in his report (identified Mat. Exbt.-VII) and marked Exbt.-6(E).

The stone-like material was received and examined by him which he mentioned in his report on Sl. No.10 (identified Mat. Exbt.-XI). The packet was sealed by him which was marked as Exbt.-6(F). The box containing 14 ink-tins of various colours was received by him. He marked the tins on Sl. No.1 to Sl. No.14 on the times only. The box was identified Mat. Exbt.-XIV) and the ink-tins were marked as Mat. Exbt.-XV to Mat. Exbt.-XV/13).

He had received all those articles from S.P., C.B.I., Calcutta at his office in sealed condition. He also received a specimen of the seal of the sender. He did not raise any objection regarding seals because all the seal, were in tact.

He received a letter dated 31.01.89 from A.K. Majumder, Spdt. of police, C.B.I., Special Crime Branch, Calcutta along with signed by Sri R.B. Bose, Inspector of Police, C.B.I., Special Crime Branch, Calcutta, which were sent along with those materials, currency notes and blocks and container (Mat. Exbt.-I, II, III, IV, V series to XIII series and XIV to XVIII, XX to XXII). Those materials were received in sealed condition within a tin box, which was marked as Mat. Exbt.-XXIII.

The notes (Mat. Exbt.-I, III, IV and V) were printed with those blocks (Mat. Exbt.-VIII collectively). He also received 14 numbers of ink containers. The inks of those containers (Mat. Exbt.-XVI and report's sl. no.13, Mat. Exbt.-XIV and report's sl. no.11 and other which were identified). The inks of all those containers (14) were used in printing those notes (Mat. Exbt.-I, III, IV & V). All counter feit notes resembled currency notes of Govt. of India of 100 rupee denomination.

xiv. During cross-examination PW-7 stated those materials were received by him personally at his office on 27.02.89 from Sri S.N. Khan, S.I. of police and Sri M.A. Khan, police constable. He carried out the examination of the questioned materials on a number of dates, ending 07.09.89. He could not mention all the dates proceeding 07.09.89 on which he started and carried out examination before the last date. Examination was carried out on 3 to 4 dates, he could not state which part of the examination was done on the first or second date or on each date. It was not in his report as to how much quantity of ink from each of the containers was used for carrying out his examination. A register for recording the movement of the articles received for examination was maintained at his office. He did not mention in his report the particulars of the apparatus and instruments used by him in the examination of those questioned notes and other materials. He had examined, according to his report, all the notes contained in the bundle - A (50 numbers), bundle – B (101 numbers), Bundle – C (11 numbers) and Bundle – D (102 numbers) and Bundle – E (7 numbers) of notes.

xv. PW-8 deposed on 19.01.1989 C.B.I. department had raided the house of the appellant at Boyarmari. He had seen a vehicle shop and some people get down from the vehicle. Those people raided the house. Out of curiosity he went there with others. Many people assembled there. On his enquiry, the C.B.I. official said they had found and recovered currency notes in the possession of the appellant at Malancha and on his statement had come to the house of the appellant for search and further recovery. When he arrived at the house of the appellant he found articles were already laid on mat spread on the court yard just beside the road and other articles were being brought from within the room. He could identify those articles. He signed it on the courtyard of appellant. Exbt.-3/6 on map litho coated white paper, item no.F back sheet.

xvi. During his cross-examination PW-8 stated the raiding team had not recorded his statement as to the search and seizure. He did not state the numbers of the currency notes which were recovered. He did not remember if he had stated to the I.O. that currency notes of Rs.35,000/- to Rs.40,000/- were recovered.

xvii. PW-9 deposed he was an Inspector, C.B.I., S.C. Branch, Calcutta. On 19.01.89 on receipt of source information he left his office at about 08:45 hours along with Dr. A.K. Biswas, Inspector, Sarbasri K.C. Sen, Rabi Gambhir and two witnesses Dipak Mukherjee and Asit Baran Majumder to work out the secret information at Malancha Bazar, Ferrighat. Prior to that discreet enquiry was made that one person was possessing forged currency notes for circulation at Malancha Bazar, Ferrighat. So, he proceeded to that place and challenged that person and recovered forged currency notes from his possession and prepared a search list in presence of witnesses and seized those forged currency notes.

During interrogation, he disclosed that those notes were manufactured at his residence. Accordingly, the appellant led them to his residence. Counter foil of 50 numbers of G.C. notes of 100 rupee denomination bearing sl. no.AK/11, 105589 and onwards were recovered. The said currency note was marked as Mat. Exbt.-I. Forged notes were seized from the left side pocket of the appellant. Thereafter, the appellant led them at his residence where those notes were manufactured and taken for circulation. Thereafter, he along with his accompanying staff and witnesses left for and reached the residence of the appellant.

During investigation, he had examined other witnesses also. He also prepared two sketch maps of the two places of occurrence in his instruction by Dr. A.K. Biswas who accompanied him in the raid which were marked as Exbt.-8 and Exbt.-8/1. The search list in respect of the search at ferrighat was prepared by him in his own hand and signed by him. Search list was marked as Exbt.-10 and signature of the witness was marked as Exbt.-1/3.

He seized forged currency notes and equipment for forged notes on recovery from the residence of the appellant under a seizure list which was marked as Exbt.-10/1. He also seized other articles under a seizure list which were marked as Mat. Exbt.-II to XVIII and Exbt.-XX to Exbt.-XXII. The bundles of forged notes (Mat. Exbt.-IV) were authenticated by the witnesses.

xviii. During his cross-examination PW-9 stated he received the information. He could not state the exact time when he received it. There was a record of the time at which information was received and record in the general diary. After returned from the raid, the gist of the result and the time of return also noted in the G.D. The gist of the manner of working out was also recorded in the G.D. He had to maintain a personal diary.

The vehicle used in working out the information was WMC 1619 and the driver was S.N. Sarkar. One log book was maintained for movement of the official vehicles. There was an attendance register for the driver at the office. He did not record any statement of the driver under Section 161 of the Cr.P.C.

The place of occurrence was within the jurisdiction of Minakhan P.S. Before entering into the jurisdiction of the P.S. he did not send any written information to the P.S. While passing they stopped at Minakhan P.S. and intimated their purpose of raid within the jurisdiction of Minakhan P.S.

The sketch maps were prepared by Mr. A.K. Biswas was not mentioned therein. There was also no endorsement on any of the two maps that those were prepared at his instruction. In the sketch map in respect of the P.O. at Malancha Ferri Ghat, the shops on the two sides of the way to ferrighat were not reflected (Exbt.-8/1). The shops of Malancha Bazar were not reflected in the portion showing Malancha Bazar area in Exbt.-8/1. The way leading towards the house of the appellant from Malancha bazar was not reflected in that sketch map (Exbt.-8/1).

He did not record any statement of the shop keepers of Malancha Bazar or of anybody of the Ferry Ghat Counter under Section 161 Cr.P.C. He also did not interrogate any of them. In the sketch map, Exbt.-8, the way from Minakhan to Sandeshkhali was reflected but Malancha Bazar was not depicted in it.

7. The prosecution evidence revealed a pattern where each witness narrating to different facets contribute to a continuous and interlocking chain. PW-1, PW-2, PW-3, PW-5, PW-6 and PW-9 related to the events at Malancha Ferry Ghat. PW-1 and PW-2 acting as independent witnesses deposed to the departure of the raiding team, their arrival at the Ferry Ghat in the morning hours and the subsequent interception of the appellant. PW-3 lends continuity by describing the positioning of the raiding party and the manner in which surveillance was conducted. PW-5 and PW-6 provide a closer account of the moment of apprehension, particularly the appellant and his conduct, his visible nervousness and attempt to manipulate the contents of his pocket. PW-9 being a senior officer corroborates the receipt of source information, the constitution of the team and the actual recovery effected from the appellant. Conjoint reading of the deposition of the aforesaid prosecution witnesses revealed a consistency in the time and place of occurrence, presence of the appellant at the Ferry Ghat, his conduct prior to search and recovery of 50 counterfeit currency notes from his person and preparation of seizure list that is Exhibit-1 series. Minor variations whether in this exact number of persons present or peripheral details do not in the Court's view detract from the essential truthfulness of their evidence. On the contrary such variations reflected a natural flavour to human testimony.

8. The second limb of the prosecution case concerned recovery from the appellant's residence. PW-5 and PW-6 deposed regarding the appellant's disclosure and the subsequent search. PW-8, a local witness though not

privy to every procedural detail, confirmed that a raid was conducted at the appellant's house and that articles were recovered. PW-9 provided a structured account of the search, seizure and preparation of documents marked Exhibit-10, 10/1 etc. The evidence of these witnesses established recovery of large quantities of counterfeit notes, seizure of printing blocks rollers in sand materials and preparation of seizure lists in the presence of witnesses. While the prosecution witnesses displayed certain limitations in recollection particularly regarding the exact number of notes, the testimony nevertheless corroborated the factum of search and recovery which was the crucial aspect. The Court is persuaded that the residential recovery is not an exaggeration but a natural sequel to the Ferry Ghat incident.

9. PW-4, the Judicial Magistrate, deposed regarding the recording of the appellant's statement under Section 164 of the Code of Criminal Procedure marked as Exhibit-4. The deposition indicated the appellant was given adequate time for reflection. His statement was recorded in accordance with law after administering necessary caution. This indicated procedural sanctity to the investigation and ensured that the prosecution case was not vitiated by irregularities at this stage.

10. The testimonies of PW-1, PW-2, PW-3, PW-5, PW-6 and PW-9 when read in juxtaposition do not merely recount an occurrence however reconstruct it with remarkable congruence. The persistent uniformity in their account revealed the movement of the raiding party in the early hours of the relevant date with their presence at Malancha Ferry Ghat and the surveillance undertaken with deliberation culminating in eventual interception of the appellant at 11:30 a.m. Multiple witnesses independently narrated

appellant's unease and his attempt to retrieve or conceal an object from his pocket. This is not an embellishment introduced by a solitary witness but a recurring feature across testimonies.

11. The recovery of 50 currency notes of Rs.100/- denomination from his person documented under Exhibit-1 series stands corroborated by these witnesses in material particulars. The Court finds no discernable reason to doubt this recovery. The suggestion that official witnesses are inherently unreliable is neither supported by precedent nor by principle.

12. It would, in the Court's view be an unwarranted abstraction to discard such consistent evidence namely because it emanated from officials discharging their duties.

13. If the Ferry Ghat recovery raised a strong presumption, the subsequent search of the appellant's residence transformed that presumption into near certainty. The evidence of PW-5, PW-6, PW-8, and PW9 revealed that the appellant's disclosure led the investigating agency to his house where from a significant array of incriminating articles was recovered. The Court cannot be oblivious to the nature and assortment of the seized articles, namely bundles of counterfeit currency; printing blocks; in containers in multiple hues; chemical substances and prepared papers. These are not articles of casual or innocent possession. They carry with them a distinct functional character, each item appearing to compliment the other. When viewed cumulatively, they suggest not an isolated act but systematic endeavour. PW-8, not a witness of meticulous detail, lends assurance to the factum of search and recovery. This court is not oblivious that memory may falter on minutiae, yet remain steadfast on substance.

14. The testimony of PW-7 introduced a different dimension- one that is grounded not in perception but in scientific validation. His report marked Exbt.-5/5A does not seek to persuade by narrative; it convinces by analysis- The notes examined were found to be counterfeit. The printing blocks correspond with the forged notes. The ink seized was used in the process of printing; the counterfeit notes bore resemblance to the genuine currency.

15. What is of particular significance is the methodical nature of the examination and the maintenance of the chain of custody. The materials were received in sealed condition and the seals were intact. This lends a degree of assurance which the Court cannot likely disregard. The expert evidence in the Court's view acts as a decisive bridge connecting the physical recoveries with their legal character.

16. PW-4 the Learned Magistrate deposed to the recording of the appellant in statement under Section 164 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. This Court finds that adequate question was administered, time for reflection was provided, the statement was recorded in accordance which essential and established safeguards. This aspect, though procedural is not insignificant as it reflected that the investigation was conducted with an awareness of legal requirements, thereby lending institutional credibility to the process.

17. When the evidence is allowed to unfold its natural sequence, a harmonious narrative emerged that the appellant is apprehended in possession of counterfeit notes. His conduct betrays consciousness of guilt. His disclosure leads to a recovery of a larger stock and manufacturing apparatus. Scientific examination confirms the counterfeit nature of the notes and links them to seized materials. Procedural safeguards to have been observed. Each witness

deposing from a different vantage point contributes to this unfolding. The Court is reminded that truth often manifests not in identical repetition but in consistent convergence.

18. The defence has sought to magnify certain discrepancies namely absence of independent witnesses in strict terms, minor inconsistencies and omissions investigations. This court while not dismissive of such submissions is equally conscious that human testimony is not a mathematical constant. Minor variations are not only inevitable but at times, indicative of authenticity. What is required is not a flawless narrative but a credible one. The evidence, as it stands, satisfies this standard. The evidence of the prosecution witnesses cumulatively present a coherent, credible and convincing account. The testimonies are not discordant voices but parts of a measured and unified narrative. The defence urged absence of direct proof of knowledge. This court finds such a submission somewhat misplaced. Knowledge, particularly in offences of this nature, seldom announces itself in express terms. It must be gathered from surrounding circumstances. Here the circumstances speak in unison. The appellant was found with counterfeit notes considered in his pocket. He attempted to manipulate the same upon interception. His residence housed not only additional notes but the very instruments of their creation to suggest that the appellant remained unaware of the nature of these articles would require the Court to accept a version that was wholly divorced from ordinary human conduct. The defence has drawn attention to certain lapses namely absence of local witnesses, lack of detailed mention of apparatus and omissions in sketch maps. This Court does not brush aside such submissions lightly, yet it must be

remembered that every investigation carries within it certain imperfections. The question is whether such imperfections, recovery corroboration and scientific validation remains intact. The lapses pointed out are peripheral and they do not dislodge the central narrative.

19. When the facts are allowed to speak for itself, the legal consequences follow almost naturally. The appellant's possession of counterfeit notes coupled with his conduct and the surroundings had consensus and satisfied the requirements of Section 489 of the Indian Penal Code. The recovery of printing blocks ink and related materials link scientifically to the forged notes conceivably attracted Section 489 of the Indian Penal Code and the Court is not inclined to interfere with the impugned orders. However, considerable time has elapsed from the date of occurrence of the offence and the sentence is reduced to the period of incarceration undergone by the appellant.

20. Accordingly, the instant criminal appeal being CRA 133 of 1994 is dismissed.

21. There is no order as to costs.

22. Trial Court records along with a copy of this judgment be sent down at once to the Learned Trial Court for necessary action.

23. Photostat certified copy of this order, if applied for, be given to the parties on priority basis on compliance of all formalities.

(Ananya Bandyopadhyay, J.)