

IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA AT
CHANDIGARH

2026.PHHC.046183



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CRM-M-25731-2023

Date of decision: 24.03.2026

Date of uploading: 24.03.2026

Kuldeep Singh and another

....Petitioner

V/s

State of Punjab

....Respondent

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE SUMEET GOEL

Present: Mr. R.S. Sidhu, Advocate for the petitioner.

Mr. Adhiraj Singh, AAG, Punjab.

SUMEET GOEL, J. (Oral)

1. The petition in hand has been filed under Section 482 of Cr.P.C.

with the following substantive prayer:

“It is therefore, most respectfully prayed the present petition may kindly be allowed and FIR No.48 dated 24.02.2020 under Section 174-A Indian Penal Code, 1860, Police Station Sadar Tarn Taran, District Tarn Taran (Annexure P-2) be quashed in the interest of justice.”

2. The impugned FIR (as set out in the petition in hand) reads thus:-

“Present - Ms. Jagjit Walia, APP for the state. Accused Kuldeep Singh and Baljinder Kaur proclaimed offenders. Statement of serving official has been recorded today. Period of 30 days has also been elapsed. Accused Kuldeep Singh and Baljinder Kaur not turned up in the court. As such, accused Kuldeep Singh and Baljinder Kaur is declared proclaimed offenders. Necessary intimation in this regard be sent to concerned police station & accused be produced before the court as and when they surrendered or arrested by the police. File be consigned to the record room, after due compliance. Copy of this order be forwarded to Station House Officer police station concerned to enable him to initiate proceedings against the accused U/s 174-A of Indian Penal Code. Pronounced on :- 2nd day of November, 2019 SD/- Amandeep Kaur (UID PB 0207) Addl. Chief

*Judicial Magistrate Tarn Taran. Endorsement No. 432 Date 06.11.2019
Copy of this ordered to be forwarded to SHO PS Sadar Tarn Taran for
compliance. Police Station today: At this time above order no. 432 dated
06.11.2019 of the court of Smt. Amandeep Kaur ACJM/TT is received
through post Kuldeep Singh son of Ajaib Singh resident of Dhandrian
District Sangrur and Baljinder Kaur wife of Kuldeep Singh resident of
Dhandrian District Sangrur, against whom case no. 42 dated 17.02.2018,
offence 420, 120-B I.P.C, Police Station Sadar Tarn Taran, was pending in
the court, order is passed by Ld Judge to register the case on being absent
in court from the hearing. On this above case is registered under above
sections and copy of the original order alongwith copy of the F.I.R is
handed over to I, ASI for further investigation. I am going to busy in the
investigation. Report has been sent to control room through E Mail
Closing Rapat No. 30, Time 02:50 PM. Dated 24.02.2020.”*

3. Learned counsel for the petitioners has submitted that the impugned FIR, has its genesis, in a criminal case filed against the petitioners (herein) under Sections 420, 120-B IPC in proceedings whereof the petitioner was declared as a proclaimed person & hence the impugned FIR came to be got registered against the petitioners. Learned counsel for the petitioners has argued that the order as also the proceedings declaring the petitioners as proclaimed person are manifestly illegal and against the mandatory provisions of law. It has been further iterated that the FIR registered for the offences under Sections 420, 120-B IPC has already been quashed in **CRM-M-21002-2023**, vide order dated 28.08.2023, as the rival parties had entered into a compromise/settlement and hence no useful purpose would be served by continuation of the proceedings *qua* the impugned FIR.

On the strength of above arguments, learned counsel for the petitioner has pressed for grant of petition in hand.

4. Learned State counsel has filed short reply by way of affidavit of Deputy Superintendent of Police, Sub-Division Khadur Sahib, Camp at Goindwal Sahib, District Tarn Taran. Learned State counsel while raising arguments in tandem with the said reply has opposed the claim of the

petitioners seeking quashing of the FIR in question. 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 petitioners is serious and heinous. Learned State counsel has submitted that the Police has conducted fair and proper investigation and after completion of the same, final report under Section 173 of Cr.P.C., 1973 was presented before the competent Court of jurisdiction. Furthermore, it has been submitted by the learned State counsel that the petitioners were served through non-bailable warrants but they did not appear which compelled the Court below to declare them proclaimed person. Instead of surrendering before the competent Court, the petitioners have chosen to file the instant petition which clearly reflects his conduct that they were fully aware of the proceedings and the coercive measures undertaken by the Court below to secure their 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.

5. I have heard learned counsel for the rival parties and have perused the paper-book.

6. The seminal question that arises for consideration in the present petition is as to whether the impugned FIR (as also proceedings arising therefrom) under Section 174-A of the IPC deserves to be quashed in the factual matrix of the present case.

7. At this juncture; it would be apposite to refer herein to a judgment of this Court passed in **CRM-M-51049-2019** titled as ***Mohammad Hanif Attari vs. State of Haryana***, decided on 06.07.2023; relevant whereof reads as under:

“3. In view the fact that after the principle proceedings in which the petitioner was declared Proclaimed Offender stand concluded, the question would arise is: 'whether in the given circumstances, proceedings under Section 174A of the IPC pursuant to FIR No.425 dated 17th of November, 2017 can be allowed to continue.

4. The question framed ibid is no more res integra and already stands answered by Co-ordinate Bench of this Court in CRM-M-43813-2018 titled as “Baldev

Chand Bansal v. State of Haryana and another” vide order dated 29.01.2019, which held as under:

“Prayer in this petition is for quashing of FIR No.64 dated 15.02.2017 filed under Section 174A of the Indian Penal Code registered at Police Station Sector-5, Panchkula and all other subsequent proceedings arising thereof as well as order dated 24.10.2016 passed by the trial Court vide which a direction was issued to register the aforesaid FIR.”

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Learned counsel for the petitioner has relied upon the decisions rendered by this Court in "Vikas Sharma v. Gurpreet Singh Kohli and another (supra), 2017, (3) L.A.R.584, Microqual Techno Limited and others v. State of Haryana and another, 2015 (32) RCR (Criminal) 790 and "Rajneesh Khanna v. State of Haryana and another" 2017 (3) L.A.R. 555 wherein in an identical circumstance, this Court has held that since the main petition filed under Section 138 of the Act stands withdrawn in view of an amicable settlement between the parties, therefore, continuation of proceedings under Section 174A of IPC shall be nothing but an abuse of the process of law.

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In view of the same, I find merit in the present petition and accordingly, present petition is allowed and the impugned order dated 24.10.2016 passed by Judicial Magistrate, 1st Class, Panchkula as well as FIR No.64 dated 15.02.2017 registered under Section 174A of the Indian Penal Code at Police Station Sector-5, Panchkula and all other subsequent proceedings arising thereof, are hereby quashed."

5. Same is the view of another Co-ordinate Bench in the "Ashok Madaan v. State of Haryana and another" reported as 2020 (4) RCR (Criminal) 87, wherein it has been held that:

"No doubt, the learned counsel for the respondent has vehemently argued that the offence under Section 174A I.P.C. is independent of the main case, therefore, merely because the main case has been

dismissed for want of prosecution, the present petition cannot be allowed, however, keeping in view the fact that the present FIR was registered only on account of absence from the proceedings in the main case which had been subsequently regularised by the court while granting bail to the petitioner, the default stood condoned. In such circumstances, continuation of proceedings under Section 174A LP.C. shall be abuse of the process of court.

7. Accordingly, the petition is allowed. FIR No. 446 dated 21.08.2017, registered under Section 174A I.P.C. at Police Station Kotwali, District Faridabad, as well as consequential proceedings shall stand quashed."

7.1. More recently, the Hon'ble Supreme Court in a judgment titled as ***Daljit Singh vs. State of Haryana and Another***, Criminal Appeal No.4359 of 2024 decided on 02.01.2025; has held that:

"7.3 Now, what happens if the status under Section 82 Cr.P.C. is nullified i.e., the person subjected to such proclamation, by virtue of subsequent developments is no longer required to be presented before a Court of law. Then, can the prosecution still proceed against such a person for having not appeared before a Court during the time that the process was in effect. The answer is in the affirmative. We say so for the following reasons:-

(i) The language of Section 174A, IPC says "whoever fails to appear at the specified place and the specified time as required by proclamation...". This implies that the very instance at which a person is directed to appear, and he does not do so, this Section comes into play;

(ii) What further flows from the language employed is that the instance of non-appearance becomes an infraction of the Section, and therefore, prosecution therefor would be independent of Section 82, Cr.P.C. being in effect;

(iii) So, while proceedings under Section 174A IPC cannot be initiated independent of Section 82, Cr.P.C., i.e., can only be started post the issuance of proclamation, they can continue if the said proclamation is no longer in effect.

*(iv) We find that the Delhi High Court has taken this view, i.e., that Section 174A, IPC is a stand-alone offence in **Mukesh Bhatia v.State (NCT of Delhi) 2022 SCC OnLine Del 1023; Divya Verma v. State 2023 SCC OnLine Del 2619; Sameena & Anr. v. State GNCT of Delhi & Anr. Crl. M.C. No.1470 of 2021, Dated 17th May, 2022** For the reasons afore-stated, we agree with the findings made*

in these judgments/orders. At the same time, it stands clarified that we have not commented on the merits of the cases.

(v) Granted that the offence prescribed in Section 174A IPC is indeed stand-alone, given that it arises out of an original offence in connection with which proceedings under Section 82 Cr.P.C. is initiated and in the said offence the accused stands, subsequently, acquitted, it would be permissible in law for the Court seized of the trial under such offence, to take note of such a development and treat the same as a ground to draw the proceedings to a close, should such a prayer be made and the circumstances of the case so warrant.

8. *In conclusion, we hold that Section 174A IPC is an independent, substantive offence, that can continue even if the proclamation under Section 82, Cr.P.C. is extinguished. It is a stand-alone offence. xxxxxxxx”*

However, the Hon’ble Supreme Court quashed the impugned FIR (therein) under Section 174-A of the IPC since, *inter alia*, the original offence in the form of criminal complaint under Section 138 of NI Act, 1881 in the said case had been settled and withdrawn by the rival parties.

8. It is for the High Court, while exercising its innate plenary powers under Section 528 of BNSS, 2023/428 of Cr.P.C., 1973, to ratiocinate that it should not apply the law in an austere, academic and exacting technical manner, without considering its practical implications. The Law is not merely a set of programmed, *nailed-to-the-ground* rules, to be applied without context. It must be enforced, while bearing in mind, that its purpose is to ensure substantive justice between the parties. The statutory provision of Section 174-A of IPC, when perused in the light of ratio decidendi of the judgment of the Hon’ble Supreme Court in ***Daljit Singh’s*** case (supra), unequivocally shows that an FIR under Section 174-A of the IPC does not *proprio vigore* become liable to be quashed, in case the rival parties have entered into a compromise and such criminal complaint/FIR has been compromised and quashed/withdrawn accordingly. However, at the same

time, the factum of the criminal complaint/FIR (in furtherance of proceedings

whereof) having been compromised/settled, is indubitably, a relevant factor to be considered while dealing with a plea for quashing of an FIR (as also proceedings emanating therefrom) under Section 174-A of IPC. It would tantamount to contravening the principles of fairness, proportionality, and justice in criminal proceedings. A literal interpretation may sometimes lead to unjust outcomes that also contradict the law's underlined purpose. Therefore, the High Court under its inherent jurisdiction must balance the letter of Law with its spirit, ensuring fair and equitable results. This approach underscores Law's role as an apparatus for fostering societal harmony and addressing the real-world complexities, efficaciously as also effectively, rather than mere literal/technical compliance.

9. The inherent jurisdiction under Section 528 BNSS, 2023/Section 482 Cr.P.C., 1973 is primarily aimed at preventing abuse of judicial process and securing the ends of justice. Thus, when the dispute is essentially personal in nature and a genuine compromise has been reached, the High Court may intervene to quash the criminal proceedings, recognizing the continuation thereof would be non-productive and unjust in the given circumstances. The inherent powers of a High Court are powers which are incidental replete powers, which if did not so exist, the Court would be obliged to sit still and helplessly see the process of law and Courts being abused for the purposes of injustice. In other words; such power(s) is intrinsic to a High Court, it is its very life-blood, its very essence, its immanent attribute. Without such power(s), a High Court would have form but lack the substance. These powers of a High Court hence deserve to be construed with the widest possible amplitude. These inherent powers are in consonance with the nature of a High Court which ought to be, and has in fact been, invested with power(s) to maintain its authority to prevent the process of law/Courts being obstructed or

abused. It is a trite posit of jurisprudence that though laws attempt to deal with all cases that may arise, the infinite variety of circumstances which shape events and the imperfections of language make it impossible to lay down provisions capable of governing every case, which in fact arises. A High Court which exists for the furtherance of justice in an indefatigable manner, should therefore, have unfettered power(s) to deal with situations which, though not expressly provided for by the law, need to be dealt with, to prevent injustice or the abuse of the process of law and Courts. The juridical basis of these plenary power(s) is the authority; in fact the seminal duty and responsibility of a High Court; to uphold, to protect and to fulfill the judicial function of administering justice, in accordance with law, in a regular, orderly and effective manner. In other words; Section 528 of BNSS, 2023 reflects peerless powers, which a High Court may draw upon as necessary whenever it is just and equitable to do so, in particular to ensure the observance of the due process of law, to prevent vexation or oppression, to do justice *nay* substantial justice between the parties and to secure the ends of justice.

10. Keeping in view the entirety of the attending facts and circumstances of the case in hand; especially the original offence being an offence under Sections 420, 120-B IPC, the original offence alleged to have been committed in the year 2018, the subject matter of the original offence having been settled amicably between the parties and the original FIR having been quashed on the basis of compromise vide order dated 28.08.2023 passed in CRM-M-21002-2023; this Court deems it appropriate that the impugned FIR as also all proceedings emanating therefrom deserve to be quashed.

11. It is, hence, directed as under:

(i) The FIR No.48 dated 24.02.2020 under Section 174-A Indian Penal Code, 1860, Police Station Sadar Tarn Taran, District Tarn Taran

(Annexure P-2) and all subsequent proceedings arising therefrom stand quashed.

(ii) All pending application(s), if any, stands disposed of.

(SUMEET GOEL)
JUDGE

March 24, 2026
Naveen

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