

CRM-M-64140-2025

2026:PHHC:033044



IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA AT CHANDIGARH

CRM-M-64140-2025

Sukhchain Kaur

....Petitioner

versus

Pala Ram

....Respondent

Date of reserve: February 24, 2026
Date of Pronouncement/ Decision: March 05, 2026
Date of Uploading: March 05, 2026

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE SUMEET GOEL

Present:- Mr. Janak Singh Bhinder, Advocate for the petitioner.

Mr. Parveen Kumar Garg, Advocate for the respondent.

SUMEET GOEL, J.

Present petition has been filed under Section 528 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 (for short 'BNSS'), seeking setting aside of the impugned order dated 30.09.2025 (Annexure P-11) passed by the learned Judicial Magistrate Ist Class, Sunam, District Sangrur, whereby, the petitioner has been declared as proclaimed person, in case NACT No.102 of 2024 titled as "Pala Ram versus Sukhchain Kaur".

2. Learned counsel for the petitioner has contended that the impugned order, whereby the petitioner has been declared a proclaimed person, is wholly illegal, arbitrary, and unsustainable in the eyes of law. Learned counsel has argued that notice, bailable and non-bailable warrants were issued against the petitioner on different occasions, but the petitioner could not appear before the Court below, since the counsel the petitioner had engaged to

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represent on her behalf, had informed the petitioner that her personal appearance would not be required in such cases unless specifically directed by the Court. Learned counsel has further argued that on 19.07.2025, proclamation proceedings were initiated against the petitioner due to her non-appearance before the trial Court, but the same was neither intentional nor deliberate. Learned counsel has iterated that on 25.08.2025, statement of serving official was recorded, and matter was adjourned to 30.09.2025 for awaiting presence of the petitioner, and vide impugned order dated 30.09.2025, learned Court below had wrongly declared the petitioner as proclaimed person.

2.1. Learned counsel has further argued that husband of the petitioner had suffered a paralytic attack in the year 2024 and was undergoing treatment in a hospital at Fatehgarh Sahib, hence, she started residing with her husband at Fatehgarh Sahib, and it is only on 10.11.2025, when she visited her house at Patiala, therefore, she came to know through her neighbours that some Court documents have been affixed on the wall of her house. The petitioner immediately contacted her counsel, in this regard, and came to know regarding the whole process and the petitioner having been declared as proclaimed person, vide order dated 30.09.2025, by the Court below.

2.2. Learned counsel for the petitioner has contended that pursuant to the order dated 22.01.2026 passed by this Court, the petitioner caused appearance before the Court below on 13.02.2026, whereupon, the petitioner was ordered to be released on bail on personal bonds. Learned counsel has further submitted that the petitioner has also deposited the costs of Rs.10,000/- being the condition precedent to grant interim bail to the petitioner by the Court below.

2.3. Learned counsel has argued that, thus, the order declaring the petitioner a proclaimed person is in gross violation of law and principles of natural justice as there was no deliberate evasion or non-appearance on the part of the petitioner. On the basis of these submissions, learned counsel has prayed that the impugned order is liable to be set-aside being illegal and unjustified and hence liable to be set-aside.

3. On the other hand, learned counsel for the respondent has opposed the present petition. While refuting the case set up by the petitioner, detailed arguments were advanced on merits, contending that the allegations levelled against the petitioner are serious in nature. Furthermore, it has been submitted that the petitioner has not willfully caused appearance before the Court below despite issuance of notice, bailable/ non-bailable warrants, and thereafter, issuance of proclamation against her. Learned counsel has argued that declaration of the petitioner as proclaimed person, vide impugned order, is in accordance with the law and after following due procedure under Section 82 of the Cr. P.C. Learned counsel has argued that the learned Court below has 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. Accordingly, dismissal of the instant petition has been prayed for.

4. I have heard the learned counsel for the rival parties and carefully perused the record of the case.

5. The law is well settled that no person can be declared a proclaimed offender/person unless the procedure prescribed under Section 82 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 is strictly and meticulously adhered to. It is trite that the provisions of Section 82 Cr.P.C. are mandatory in nature,

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and any non-compliance thereof vitiates the entire proceedings. Furthermore, Section 82(1) of the Cr. P.C. clearly provides that before issuing a proclamation requiring a person to appear, the Court must have reason to believe that such person has absconded or is concealing so that the warrant cannot be executed. In the present case, perusal of the *zimni* orders dated 04.09.2024, 28.10.2024, 14.01.2025, 06.03.2025, 14.05.2025 and 19.07.2025, appended with the petition in hand, reveals that bailable/ non-bailable warrants issued against the petitioner remained unexecuted. Thereafter, vide order dated 19.07.2025, proclamation was issued against the petitioner requiring her to appear before the Court below on 25.08.2025. Perusal of the impugned order reveals that no satisfaction was recorded regarding execution of proclamation against the petitioner in accordance with the provisions of Section 82 of the Cr. P.C.

5.1. Furthermore, learned counsel for the petitioner has specifically pleaded by that owing to health conditions of her husband, the petitioner moved to Fatehgarh Sahib to reside with him and to take care of him. It is only in November 2025, when the petitioner visited Patiala, she, through her neighbours and upon her query to counsel before the Court below, came to know about Court proceedings. Learned counsel has pleaded that non-appearance of the petitioner before the Court below was neither intentional nor deliberate.

5.2. It is worthwhile to mention here that, pursuant to the order dated 22.01.2026 passed by this Court in the present petition, the petitioner duly appeared before the Court below on 13.02.2026 and has since joined the proceedings. The said Court has directed the petitioner to be released on bail, subject to furnishing personal bonds. Further, the petitioner has also deposited

costs of Rs. 10,000/- as imposed by the Court below as a condition precedent for the grant of interim bail, thereby demonstrating her bona fides and willingness to submit to the jurisdiction of the Court.

6. This Court finds that the course adopted by the Court below is in clear contravention of, and antithetical to, the provisions of Section 82 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973. The Court below has committed a manifest illegality by issuing and acting upon the proclamation without ensuring strict compliance with the mandatory statutory requirements. The learned Court below, while declaring the petitioner as a proclaimed person, failed to record the requisite judicial satisfaction regarding due execution and publication of the proclamation in accordance with law and appears to have proceeded in a mechanical and perfunctory manner, thereby rendering the impugned order legally unsustainable. Moreover, the material on record indicates that the petitioner's non-appearance was not deliberate but was occasioned by compelling and unavoidable circumstances, namely the serious ill health of her husband, which necessitated her relocation to take care for him. The Court below failed to consider this bona fide explanation and the absence of any intention on the part of the petitioner to evade the process of law, thereby vitiating the declaration of the petitioner as a proclaimed person. Such an order being violative of mandatory provisions of law, cannot be sustained. Section 82 of the Criminal Procedure Code, 1973 reads as under:

“82. Proclamation for person absconding. - (1) If any Court has reason to believe (whether after taking evidence or not) that any person against whom a warrant has been issued by it has absconded or is concealing himself so that such warrant cannot be executed, such Court may publish a written proclamation requiring him to appear at a specified place and at a specified time not less than thirty days from the date of publishing such proclamation.
(2) The proclamation shall be published as follows: -

- (i)(a) it shall be publicly read in some conspicuous place of the town or village in which such person ordinarily resides;
- (b) it shall be affixed to some conspicuous part of the house or homestead in which such person ordinarily resides or to some conspicuous place of such town or village;
- (c) a copy thereof shall be affixed to some conspicuous part of the court-house;
- (ii) the Court may also, if it thinks fit, direct a copy of the proclamation to be published in a daily newspaper circulating in the place in which such person ordinarily resides.
- (3) A statement in writing by the Court issuing the proclamation to the effect that the proclamation was duly published on a specified day, in the manner specified in clause (i) of sub-section (2), shall be conclusive evidence that the requirements of this Section have been complied with, and that the proclamation was published on such day.
- [(4) Where a proclamation published under sub-section (1) is in respect of a person accused of an offence punishable under Sections 302, 304, 364, 367, 382, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 402, 436, 449, 459, or 460 of the Indian Penal Code (45 of 1860), and such person fails to appear at the specified place and time required by the proclamation, the Court may, after making such inquiry as it thinks fit, pronounce him a proclaimed offender and make a declaration to that effect.
- (5) The provisions of sub-sections (2) and (3) shall apply to a declaration made by the Court under sub-section (4) as they apply to the proclamation published under sub-section (1).f”

7. A Coordinate Bench of this Court while dealing with invocation of the provision of Section 82 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, against an accused in the case of ‘**Sonu v. State of Haryana, 2021(1) RCR (Criminal) 319**’, held as under:

“9. The essential requirements of section 82 of the Cr.P.C., 1973 for issuance and publication of proclamation against an absconder and declaring him as proclaimed person/offender may be summarized as under:-

(i) Prior issuance of warrant of arrest by the Court is sine qua non for issuance and publication of the proclamation and the Court has to first issue warrant of arrest against the person concerned. (See Rohit Kumar v. State of Delhi: 2008 CrI. J. 2561).

(ii) There must be a report before the Court that the person against whom warrant was issued had absconded or had been concealing himself so that the warrant of arrest could not be executed against him. However, the Court is not bound to take evidence in this regard before issuing a Proclamation under section 82(1) of the Cr.P.C., 1973. (See Rohit Kumar v. State of Delhi : 2008 CrI. J. 2561).

(iii) The Court cannot issue the Proclamation as a matter of course because the Police is asking for it. The Court must be prima facie satisfied that the person has absconded or is concealing himself so that the warrant of arrest, previously issued, cannot be executed, despite reasonable diligence. (See Bishundayal Mahton and others v. Emperor : AIR 1943 Patna 366 and Devender Singh Negi v. State of U.P. : 1994 CrI LJ (Allahabad HC) 1783).

(iv) *The requisite date and place for appearance must be specified in the proclamation requiring such person to appear on such date at the specified place. Such date must not be less than 30 clear days from the date of issuance and publication of the proclamation. (See Gurappa Gugal and others v. State of Mysore : 1969 CriLJ 826 and Shokat Ali v. State of Haryana : 2020(2) RCR (CRIMINAL) 339).*

(v) *Where the period between issuance and publication of the proclamation and the specified date of hearing is less than thirty days, the accused cannot be declared a proclaimed person/offender and the proclamation has to be issued and published again. (See Dilbagh Singh v. State of Punjab (P&H) : 2015 (8) RCR (CRIMINAL) 166 and Ashok Kumar v. State of Haryana and another : 2013 (4) RCR (CRIMINAL) 550)*

(vi) *The Proclamation has to be published in the manner laid down in section 82(2) of the Cr.P.C., 1973. For publication the proclamation has to be first publicly read in some conspicuous place of the town or village in which the accused ordinarily resides; then the same has to be affixed to some conspicuous part of the house or homestead in which the accused ordinarily resides or to some conspicuous place of such town or village and thereafter a copy of the proclamation has to be affixed to some conspicuous part of the Court-house. The three sub-clauses (a)- (c) in section 82 (2)(i) of the Cr.P.C., 1973 are conjunctive and not disjunctive, which means that there would be no valid publication of the proclamation unless all the three modes of publication are proved. (See Pawan Kumar Gupta v. The State of W.B. : 1973 CriLJ 1368). Where the Court so orders a copy of the proclamation has to be additionally published in a daily newspaper circulating in the place in which the accused ordinarily resides. Advisably, proclamation has to be issued with four copies so that one each of the three copies of the proclamation may be affixed to some conspicuous part of the house or homestead in which the accused ordinarily resides, to some conspicuous place of such town or village and to some conspicuous part of the Courthouse and report regarding publication may be made on the fourth copy of the proclamation. Additional copy will be required where the proclamation is also required to be published in the newspaper.*

(vii) *Statement of the serving officer has to be recorded by the Court as to the date and mode of publication of the proclamation. (See Birad Dan v. State: 1958 CriLJ 965).*

(viii) *The Court issuing the proclamation has to make a statement in writing in its order that the proclamation was duly published on a specified day in a manner specified in section 82(2)(i) of the Cr.P.C., 1973. Such statement in writing by the Court is declared to be conclusive evidence that the requirements of Section 82 have been complied with and that the proclamation was published on such day. (See Birad Dan v. State: 1958 CriLJ 965).*

(xi) *The conditions specified in section 82(2) of the Cr.P.C., 1973 for the publication of a Proclamation against an absconder are mandatory. Any non-compliance therewith cannot be cured as an 'irregularity' and renders the Proclamation and proceedings subsequent thereto a nullity. (See Devendra Singh Negi alias Debu v. State of U.P. and another: 1994 CriLJ 1783 and Pal Singh v. The State: 1955 CriLJ 318)."*

8. It is by now a settled principle of law that prior to issuing a proclamation under Section 82 Cr. P.C., the Court is required to record its satisfaction that the accused, against whom such proclamation is sought, is

absconding or is concealing with the intention to evade arrest. This foundational and jurisdictional requirement is conspicuously absent in the present case. A perusal of the impugned order dated 30.09.2025 reveals that no such satisfaction has been recorded by the Court below, nor does the record disclose any material which could justify an inference that the petitioner had absconded or was deliberately avoiding appearance before the Court. Furthermore, the effecting of proclamation was not done as per provisions of Section 82 of the Cr. P.C., resulting in serious prejudice to the petitioner.

9. The provisions of Section 82 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, having serious civil and criminal ramifications *qua* the rights of an accused, particularly affecting his liberty and participation in trial proceedings, cannot be invoked in a casual or cavalier manner. The mandatory requirement of recording satisfaction that the accused has absconded or is concealing himself so that the warrant of arrest cannot be executed, as embodied under Section 82 Cr.P.C., must be scrupulously complied with on the basis of cogent and relevant material available on record. Any non-adherence to this statutory mandate while declaring an accused as a proclaimed offender/person vitiates the proclamation proceedings in their entirety.

10. In the aforesaid backdrop, this Court is of the considered opinion that no useful purpose would be served by permitting the criminal proceedings to continue against the petitioner, which are founded upon an illegal and procedurally flawed proclamation. It is, therefore, a fit and appropriate case for the exercise of inherent powers under Section 528 of the BNSS / Section 482 of the Cr.P.C., so as to prevent abuse of the process of law and to secure the ends of justice.

11. In view of the above findings, and considering the entirety of the facts and circumstances of the present case, the present petition is allowed. Consequently, the impugned order dated 30.09.2025 (Annexure P-11) passed by the learned Judicial Magistrate Ist Class, Sunam, District Sangrur, whereby, the petitioner has been declared as proclaimed person, in case NACT No.102 of 2024 titled as “Pala Ram versus Sukhchain Kaur”, as well as all consequential proceedings arising therefrom, are hereby quashed.
12. Pending application(s), if any, shall also stand disposed of accordingly.

(SUMEET GOEL)
JUDGE

March 05, 2026
mahavir

Whether speaking/reasoned: Yes/No

Whether reportable: Yes/No