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

+ **CRL.M.C. 1519/2026**

VARUN GUDWANI & ORS.

.....Petitioners

Through: Mr. Shivang Chawla, Ms. Pooja Kumari, Mr. Tej Bahadur, Ms. Navneet Sharma and Mr. Rahul Kumar, Advocates.

versus

STATE NCT OF DELHI & ANR.

.....Respondents

Through: Ms. Manjeet Arya, APP with Mr. Abhimanyu Arya, Advocate with SI Devender Yadao.
Ms. Meghna Bali, Advocate for R2.

CORAM:

HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE PRATEEK JALAN

ORDER

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27.02.2026

1. By way of this petition under Section 528 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 ["BNSS"] (corresponding to Section 482 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 ["CrPC"]), the petitioners seek quashing of FIR bearing No.120/2023 dated 14.03.2023, registered at Police Station Vikas Puri, District West, New Delhi, under Sections 498A/406/34 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860 ["IPC"], and all proceedings emanating therefrom, on the ground of settlement.

2. Issue notice. Ms. Manjeet Arya, learned Additional Public Prosecutor, accepts notice on behalf of the State. Ms. Meghna Bali, learned counsel, accepts notice on behalf of respondent No. 2 –



complainant.

3. Petitioner No. 1 and respondent No. 2 were married on 26.04.2019. Due to matrimonial discord and temperamental differences between the parties, they have been living separately since 01.07.2022.

4. Respondent No. 2 lodged a formal complaint before the Crime against Women Cell, and the same culminated into the impugned FIR, against her husband and his family members. Upon completion of investigation, a chargesheet was filed.

5. Petitioner No. 1 and respondent No. 2 have since entered into a settlement, recorded in a Deed of Settlement dated 11.03.2025. The settlement contemplates certain reciprocal obligations between the parties. While petitioner No. 1 was to pay a sum of Rs. 35,00,000/- to respondent No. 2, respondent No. 2 was required to vacate the premises mentioned therein¹, and hand over possession thereof to petitioner Nos. 2 and 3.

6. The petitioners are present in Court, and are identified by their learned counsel, as well as by the Investigating Officer. Respondent No. 2 is also present in person, and is identified by her learned counsel and the Investigating Officer.

7. By order dated 24.02.2026, it was recorded as follows:

“1. The petitioners have filed this petition under Section 528 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 [corresponding to Section 482 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973] seeking quashing of FIR No. 120/2023 dated 14.03.2023, registered at Police Station Vikas Puri, District West, New Delhi, under Sections 498A/406/34 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860, and all proceedings emanating therefrom, on the ground of settlement.

2. Respondent No. 2 – complainant is present in Court, and is

¹ The details of the premises are not available on the file of this Court, as the same has been redacted.



represented by Ms. Meghna Bali, learned counsel. It is submitted by Ms. Bali that respondent No. 2 is required to vacate the premises mentioned in the Settlement Agreement, and hand over possession thereof to the petitioners at the time of quashing of the FIR. However, as she was informed only yesterday evening that the petition is to be listed today, she seeks a few days' time to do the needful.

3. *In view of the above, list on 27.02.2026."*

8. Pursuant to the aforesaid order, Ms. Bali, instructed by respondent No. 2, who is present in Court, states that the complete set of keys given to respondent No. 2 has been handed over. However, Mr. Shivang Chawla, learned counsel for the petitioners, apprehends that the complete set of keys has not been handed over. Respondent No. 2 states that she does not have any other keys to the premises, and that no goods belonging to her remain therein. She categorically states that the petitioners may deal with the premises as they deem fit, including breaking open any doors, cupboards, almirahs etc., if need be. Ms. Bali further undertakes that respondent No. 2 does not have any right, title, or interest in the premises. Mr. Chawla, instructed by the petitioners, who are also present in Court, states that the petitioners are satisfied with this arrangement.

9. As noted above, the settlement contemplates payment of a sum of Rs. 35,00,000/-, by petitioner No. 1 to respondent No. 2, towards full and final settlement of all claims. I am informed that an amount of Rs. 29,00,000/- has already been paid in terms of the settlement. The remaining amount of Rs. 6,00,000/- has been paid to respondent No. 2 today.

10. Pursuant to the settlement, the marriage between petitioner No. 1 and respondent No. 2 has been dissolved by a decree of divorce by



mutual consent, passed by the Family Court on 19.01.2026.

11. In light of the aforesaid, the parties seek quashing of the impugned FIR.

12. Learned counsel for the parties confirm that the settlement has been entered into voluntarily, without any force or coercion.

13. Although the offence under Section 498A of the IPC is non-compoundable, the Supreme Court has clearly held that, in certain circumstances, the High Courts, in exercise of their powers under Section 482 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 [corresponding to Section 528 of the BNSS], can quash criminal proceedings, even with respect to non-compoundable offences, on the ground that there is a compromise between the accused and the complainant, especially when no overarching public interest is adversely affected.

14. The Supreme Court, in *Gian Singh v. State of Punjab and Anr.*², held as follows:

“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

² (2012) 10 SCC 303.



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.”³

Further, in *Narinder Singh and Ors. v. State of Punjab and Anr.*⁴, the Supreme Court has also laid down guidelines for High Courts while accepting settlement deeds between parties and quashing the proceedings. The relevant observations in the said decision read as under:

“29. In view of the aforesaid discussion, we sum up and lay down the following principles by which the High Court would be guided in giving adequate treatment to the settlement between the parties and exercising its power under Section 482 of the Code while accepting the settlement and quashing the proceedings or refusing to accept the settlement with direction to continue with the criminal proceedings:

29.1. Power conferred under Section 482 of the Code is to be distinguished from the power which lies in the Court to compound the offences under Section 320 of the Code. No doubt, under Section 482 of the Code, the High Court has inherent power to quash the criminal proceedings even in those cases which are not compoundable, where the parties have settled the matter between themselves. However, this power is to be exercised sparingly and with caution.

29.2. When the parties have reached the settlement and on that basis petition for quashing the criminal proceedings is filed, the guiding factor in such cases would be to secure:

(i) ends of justice, or

³ Emphasis supplied.

⁴ (2014) 6 SCC 466.



(ii) to prevent abuse of the process of any court.

While exercising the power the High Court is to form an opinion on either of the aforesaid two objectives.

29.3. Such a power is not to be exercised in those prosecutions which involve heinous and serious offences of mental depravity or offences like murder, rape, dacoity, etc. Such offences are not private in nature and have a serious impact on society. Similarly, for the offences alleged to have been committed under special statute like the Prevention of Corruption Act or the offences committed by public servants while working in that capacity are not to be quashed merely on the basis of compromise between the victim and the offender.

29.4. On the other hand, those criminal cases having overwhelmingly and predominantly civil character, particularly those arising out of commercial transactions or arising out of matrimonial relationship or family disputes should be quashed when the parties have resolved their entire disputes among themselves.

29.5. While exercising its powers, the High Court is to examine as to whether the possibility of conviction is remote and bleak and continuation of criminal cases would put the accused to great oppression and prejudice and extreme injustice would be caused to him by not quashing the criminal cases.”⁵

15. In the present case, the proceedings between the parties arise out of a matrimonial relationship, which has already culminated in a decree of divorce. Applying the tests laid down by the Supreme Court, it may be observed that respondent No. 2 has also categorically affirmed the voluntary nature of the settlement before the Court. In these circumstances, the criminal proceedings are unlikely to result in conviction, and its continuation would be an empty formality, adding to the burden of the justice system and consuming public resources unnecessarily.

16. The terms of settlement have also been fully implemented, as stated hereinabove. There is, therefore, no impediment to the grant of the relief sought.

⁵ Emphasis supplied.



17. Having regard to the above discussion, the petition is allowed, and FIR bearing No.120/2023 dated 14.03.2023, registered at Police Station Vikas Puri, District West, New Delhi, under Sections 498A/406/34 of the IPC, alongwith all consequential proceedings arising therefrom, is hereby quashed.

18. The parties will remain bound by the terms of the settlement.

19. The petition accordingly stands disposed of.

PRATEEK JALAN, J

FEBRUARY 27, 2026

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