



2026:DHC:1390



* IN THE HIGH COURT OF DELHI AT NEW DELHI

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Reserved on: 29th October, 2025

Pronounced on: 09th February, 2026

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CRL.A.1548/2025

STATE (GOVT OF NCT OF DELHI)

.....Petitioner

Through: Ms. Richa Dhawan, APP for State.

Versus

MEETU SINGH

S/o Bhagmal

R/o Village Balsa, P.O Kansa Koti

Tehsil and P.S. Rohru

District Shimla, Himachal Pradesh.

.....Respondent

Through: Mr. Sujit Jaiswal, Advocate.

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CRL.M.C.2431/2017, CRL.M.A.9874/2017

1. RAMESH CHANDER

S/o Sh. Dariya Singh

R/o 229, Type-I, Police Colony

Shalimar Bagh, Delhi.

2. JAGBIR SINGH

S/o Late Bhim Singh

R/o H.No.678/29, Gali No.2,

Malviya Nagar, Sonapat, Haryana.

3. RAMPAL

S/o Late Sita Ram

R/o H.No.476, Platinum Apartments,

Sector-18, Rohini,

Delhi.

.....Petitioners

Through: Mr. Jayesh, Advocate.

versus

CRL.A.1548/2025

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Signature Not Verified

Signed By: VIKAS

ARORA

Signing Date: 18.02.2026

18:43:31

**STATE (NCT OF DELHI)**

.....Respondents

Through: Ms. Richa Dhawan, Ld. APP for
State.

CORAM:**HON'BLE MS. JUSTICE NEENA BANSAL KRISHNA****J U D G M E N T****NEENA BANSAL KRISHNA, J.****CRL.A.1548/2025**

1. A Criminal Petition under Section 378(1) of the Code of Criminal Procedure (*hereinafter referred to as "Cr.P.C"*) has been filed on behalf of the **Petitioner/State** challenging the Order dated 06.05.2017 passed by learned Special Judge, CBI-01, Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi, acquitting the Respondent in case FIR No. 121/2012 under Section 30/40/41 of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 (*hereinafter referred to as "Wildlife Act"*) and directing registration of FIR against the Police officials.

CRL.M.C. 2431/2017

2. A Petition under Section 482 Cr.P.C has been filed on behalf of the Petitioners/Complainant to challenge the Judgment dated 06.05.2017 passed by learned Special Judge, CBI-01, Central District, Delhi in Criminal Appeal No. 14/2016, who has set aside the conviction of the Respondents under Section 51 Wildlife Act of Learned M.M dated 22.10.2016 and acquitted the Respondents.

CRL.A 1548/2025 & CRL.M.C.2431/2017

3. The **brief facts in the aforesaid two matters** are that on 04.05.2012, at about at about 5 PM, Const. Rampal received a secret information regarding illegal trade of wild animal skins. He shared the information with



I.O. Inspector Satya Prakash who informed the Senior Officers, who directed him to take action. Consequently, I.O. Inspector Satya Prakash organized a Raiding Team comprising of himself, ASI Baljit, ASI Ramesh, HC Jitender, HC Jagbir, Const. Sunil, Const. Amit, Const. Pradeep, Const. Rampal and Const. Jagbir and the secret informer. They made the Departure Entry *vide* DD No.21 at about 05:30 P.M. at SIT Crime Branch, Rohini, Delhi.

4. Thereafter, the Raiding Team reached Karnal Bypass, G.T. Road. At about 06:30 P.M., on the pointing out of the secret informer, Respondent/Meetu Singh was apprehended by HC Jagbir and Const. Rampal. Thereafter, three leopard skins wrapped in plastic sheet were recovered from the plastic *katta (bag)* which the Respondent was carrying. The skins were seized *vide* Seizure Memo Ex. CW-1/A. Thereafter, ***FIR No. 121/2012*** under ***Section 30, 40 and 41 of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972***, was registered.

5. The Accused Meetu Singh was interrogated and arrested and his Disclosure Statement was also recorded. On the next day i.e. 05.05.2012, he was produced before the concerned Court along with the case property and was remanded to Judicial Custody. The case file was released to the concerned Officials of the Wild Life Department and the case property was handed over to the I.O. Inspector Satya Prakash for onwards transmission to the Wild Life Institute, Dehradun for Expert opinion.

6. The Scientific Analysis Report was received, giving an opinion that *all the three skins were of Leopard (Panthera Pardus)*, *vide Report dated 03.09.2012*. It was further mentioned that Leopard is a specified animal and listed under Schedule I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.



7. Shri R.R. Meena, Wildlife Inspector filed the **Complaint** under *Section 55 of the Wildlife Act* against the Respondent.
8. After the cognizance was taken and the Respondent appeared in response to the Summons, the Complainant in the pre-charge evidence, examined *CW1, Inspector Satya Prakash, CW2, HC Jagbir Singh* and *CW5, HC Rampal* who were part of the Raiding Team and proved the Raid and the seizure of the Leopard skins from the Respondent.
9. *CW3, C.P. Sharma* Senior Technical Officer from Wildlife Forensic Cell, Dehradun proved the Forensic Report, Ex. CW3/A.
10. *CW4, R.R. Meena*, Wildlife Inspector deposed that on 21.09.2012 he had received the file from Const. Ram Pal, P.S. Crime Branch for necessary action under the Wildlife Act. Thereafter he filed the Complaint, Ex. CW4/A under Section 55 Wildlife Act.
11. After the pre-charge evidence, **Charges** were framed against the Respondent/Meetu Singh under *Sections 49 and 49(B)(1) of the Act punishable under Section 51 of the Act*, for being found in possession of three Leopard skins (uncured) with no valid licence or documents for keeping the Leopard skin.
12. In the post-charge evidence, the same Witnesses were examined and duly Cross-Examined by the Counsel for the Respondent.
13. The **Statement of the Respondent** was recorded under *Section 313 read with Section 281 Cr.P.C.* wherein he denied all the incriminating evidence and claimed that he was falsely implicated in this case. He did not lead any evidence in his Defence.
14. **The learned ACMM** in his *Judgment dated 22.10.2016*, relied on the Testimony of PW1, Inspector Satya Prakash, CW2, HC Jagbir Singh and



CW5, HC Rampal, who had consistently deposed about the apprehension of the Respondent and recovery of the Leopard skin, ***to convict the Respondent under Section 49 Wildlife Act. He was sentenced to three years imprisonment and fine of Rs. 10,000/-, vide Order dated 11.11.2016.***

15. The Respondent preferred **an Appeal** before the Court of Sessions against his Conviction.

16. Learned Special Judge, CBI in his Impugned Judgment dated 06.05.2017 noted the unreliability of the manner in which the Respondent was apprehended and also the manner in which the investigations were conducted. In the light of the discrepancies and contradictions, benefit was extended to the **Respondent who was acquitted, vide Judgment dated 06.05.2017.**

17. *Aggrieved by the Acquittal, the aforesaid two Appeals have been preferred by the Appellants. The Appeal No. 1548/2025 (Leave to Appeal No.462/2017) has been filed by the Complainant, Ramesh Chander.*

18. *Appeal No. 1548/2025 has been filed by the State which is essentially aggrieved by the directions given by ld. ASJ to send the copy of judgment to the Joint Commissioner (Vigilance), Delhi Police to initiate appropriate Disciplinary action against the aforesaid four Police officials namely Inspector Satya Prakash, ASI Ramesh, Const. Rampal and HC Jagbir for having committed the illegal acts. It was further directed that the formal FIR under Section 167/220/34 of the Indian Penal Code be registered and the original handwritten documents, Ex. CW1/A to CW1/F be sent to CFSL for comparison by an expert opinion and thereafter a final Report under Section 173 Cr.P.C. be submitted to the Court.*



19. The **grounds of Appeal** are that the Complainant witnesses were examined on behalf of the Prosecution, who supported the case on all material grounds. It has not been appreciated that in the case of Buntly @ Guddu vs. State of M.P., AIR 2004 SC 261 it had been held that it is not necessary to cite all the members of the Raiding party, as Witnesses and the Prosecution was at liberty to choose two or some of them, in order to save the time of the Court from repetitive depositions on the same factual aspects of the case. The evidence of the Witnesses were consistent, which has not been appreciated in the right perspective.

20. *It is, therefore, submitted that the Acquittal by the Learned Special Judge is bad in law and the Conviction as awarded by learned ACMM vide Order dated 22.10.2016 be restored.*

21. In **Appeal No. 1548/2025**, learned **Additional Public Prosecutor for the State** has further argued that the signatures of Inspector Satya Prakash differed in different documents because his hand used to shake and was not stable. Such discrepancy in the signatures, could not have been a basis to discredit the documents prepared by Inspector Satya Prakash. It is further submitted that learned Special Judge has passed strictures against the Police officials which were not merited as they were only discharging their duty and the remarks made against them in the Judgment, may be expunged. **Submissions heard and record perused.**

22. As per the case of the Prosecution, a secret information was received by *CW5, Const. Rampal* on 04.05.2012 at about 05:00 PM, which he conveyed to Inspector Satya Prakash, the I.O. who formed a Raiding Team consisting of himself, Const. Rampal and eight other Constables/Police Officials. Inspector Satya Prakash made a DD entry No.21 at about 05:30



P.M at SIT Crime Branch and thereafter, they went to Karnal Bypass, G.T. Road. At about 06:30 PM on the pointing out of secret informer, the Respondent was apprehended and from his possession, *three uncured leopard skin were recovered.*

23. Section 50 of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 provides that *the Police Officer not below the rank of Sub Inspector is empowered to inspect and seize the wildlife products which are in contravention of the provisions of the Act.*

24. The Learned Special Judge has noted that after the alleged recovery of Leopard skin from the Respondent, Inspector Satya Parkash arrested him *vide* Arrest Memo, Ex. CW1/E and recorded his Disclosure Statement, Ex. CW1/D. He also prepared the Personal Search Memo, Ex. CW1/F. However, the perusal of the three documents indicate that they were not prepared by Inspector Satya Prakash, in his own handwriting. They all were prepared in three different handwritings, in three different pens and ink.

25. It was further observed by Ld. ASJ that the perusal of these documents reflected that the Disclosure Statement, Ex. CW1/D and Arrest Memo, Ex. CW1/E appear to have genuine signatures of Inspector Satya Prakash while the signatures on Personal Search Memo Ex. CW1/F appeared to be different. Likewise, even the Site Plan, Ex. CW1/E did not appear to be in the handwriting of Inspector Satya Prakash and it was in different handwriting and in a different pen and ink. *His alleged signatures also appear to be different and forged.* Reference was made to the cross-examination of **CW1, Inspector Satya Prakash** who deposed that on 03.05.2012 he had gone out of station and had handed over the file to ASI Ramesh, for further investigations.



26. It was concluded that it appeared that ASI Ramesh was the person who had completed all the investigations and had prepared various documents, but the signatures of Inspector Satya Prakash were obtained subsequently or they were manipulated. It was thus held, that Inspector Satya Prakash was never a Member of the alleged Raiding Team and had not organized the Team or conducted the Raid on 04.05.2012, as was alleged in the Complaint. It was in fact, ASI Ramesh who had conducted the investigations.

27. It was further observed that as per Section 51 of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, it is only a Police Officer above the rank of Sub Inspector who was competent to conduct the investigations. *Therefore, the preparation of documents by Inspector Satya Prakash was necessitated and manipulated.* ASI Ramesh who has shown to have conducted the entire Raid/proceedings was not competent to conduct the search or effect the alleged recovery.

28. In this regard, it may be observed that while the investigations are being conducted, the documents may be prepared by any Official who is part of the Raiding Team, but so long as the signatures are those of the concerned person, these documents cannot be faulted merely on the ground of having been prepared by some other official. It is evident that when all the investigations which are done on the spot, the IO may not be able to prepare all the Paper work himself, and some documents may be prepared by the person assisting him in the investigations in preparing the documents. Merely because these documents were in different inks or different handwriting, would not per se reflect that they had been manipulated or that the signatures of Inspector Satya Prakash had been forged and had been



manipulated and had been obtained subsequently. *This in itself could not have been a ground to doubt the entire investigations/proceedings or that Inspector Satya Prakash was not the person concerned to conduct the investigations.*

29. Admittedly, the documents i.e. Disclosure Statement and the Arrest Memo had the original signatures. There is no reason to question the presence of Inspector Satya Prakash, in conducting the Raid

30. The **next aspect** of significance which emerges is *the manner in which the Respondent was apprehended.*

31. According to the Testimony of CW1 Inspector Satya Prakash, he along with all the members of the Raiding Team had gone to Karnal Bypass and had apprehended the Respondent, while he was walking down the road. Pertinently, in his Personal Search, a Bus ticket was recovered, though the same was not found on record.

32. Apparently, the Respondent had got off the Bus and had been identified by the secret informer, but significantly, neither CW1 nor CW2 nor CW5 deposed how the Respondent reached the spot. There is a huge ambiguity on this aspect; the claim of the witnesses that he was present at G.T. Karnal Road and recovery of three uncured Leopard skins were made by him at that spot, is not beyond doubt.

33. A further doubt is created as the Seizure Memo, Ex.CW1/A had the FIR number mentioned on the top, even though the FIR had been registered subsequently. The Supreme Court in the case of Radhey Shyam vs. State of Haryana, (2001) 10 SCC 206 had observed that while the FIR gets registered first and the Seizure Memo prepared subsequently, but the very



fact that there is a mention of FIR on the Seizure Memo shows that it was prepared before the registration of FIR.

34. The Co-ordinate Bench of this Court in Prithvi Pal Singh @ Munna vs. State, 2000 (1) JCC (Delhi) 274 had also in the similar circumstances had observed that such procedural abrasions reflect upon the veracity of the Prosecution case and robs the efficacy of the evidence of the aforesaid Police Officials regarding the alleged recovery from the Appellant's possession.

35. In the present case as well, considering the discrepancy of the FIR number featuring over the Seizure Memo, thereby indicating that the Seizure Memo had been prepared subsequently, creates a doubt about the recovery itself.

36. To conclude, serious doubts have emerged from the Testimony of the Complainant witnesses with regard to the manner of apprehension of the Respondent and the alleged recovery. The benefit of doubt has been rightly extended to the Respondent while acquitting him. ***The present Crl. M.C No.2431/2017 filed by the Complainant, challenging the acquittal of the Respondent, is accordingly dismissed.***

37. The State in its Appeal No.1548/2025 is essentially aggrieved by the strictures and the directions given by the Ld. ASJ, directing Disciplinary enquiry and the FIR against the Four Police Officials.

38. The learned Special Judge, observed that the handwriting on the various Memos were different and the signatures of IO Satya Prakash appeared to be different. Thus, it was directed that the copy of the Judgment to be served to Joint Commissioner (Vigilance), Delhi Police with the directions to initiate appropriate *Disciplinary action against the aforesaid*



four Police officials namely Inspector Satya Prakash, ASI Ramesh, Const. Rampal and HC Jagbir for having committed the illegal acts. It was further directed that the *formal FIR under Section 167/220/34 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860* be registered and the original handwritten documents, Ex.CW1/A to CW1/F be sent to CFSL for comparison by an expert opinion and thereafter, a final Report under Section 173 Cr.P.C be submitted to the Court.

39. However, in the light of observations herein above, that this cannot be a ground to disbelieve the presence of IO on the spot, or to conclude that the investigations were manipulated. Therefore, the *observations made by the Learned Special Judge directing the Disciplinary Enquiry and the Registration of FIR with specific directions of how the investigations should be carried out, is absolutely unwarranted. Such part of the Judgment is, therefore, set aside.*

40. The CrI.M.C No.2431/2017 is hereby **dismissed**. Appeal No. 1548/2025 of the State to the extent of challenging directions for Disciplinary action/registration of FIR, is allowed to the extent that such directions are set aside.

41. The aforesaid Criminal Appeal No.1548/2025 and CRL.M.C.2431/2017 are disposed of accordingly, along with the pending Application(s).

**(NEENA BANSAL KRISHNA)
JUDGE**

FEB RUARY 09, 2026/VA