



**IN THE HIGH COURT OF PUNJAB & HARYANA
AT CHANDIGARH**

116

CRR-542-2025

Date of decision: 24th March, 2025

Girdhari Lal (wrongly named as Gulshan Lal Dhawan in complaint)

...Petitioner

Versus

State of Punjab and another

...Respondents

CORAM: HON'BLE MRS. JUSTICE MANISHA BATRA

Present: Mr. Manish Verma, Advocate for the petitioner.

Ms. Ruchika Sabherwal, Sr. DAG, Punjab.

Mr. G.S. Sidhu, Advocate for respondent No.2.

MANISHA BATRA, J (ORAL):-

The instant revision petition has been filed by the petitioner against the judgment of conviction and order on quantum of sentence both dated 07.06.2017, passed by the Court of learned Judicial Magistrate First Class, Hoshiarpur in complaint bearing No. 581 dated 04.11.2014 titled as ***Satish Kumar Malhotra Vs. Gulshan Lal Dhawan***, filed under Section 138 of the Negotiable Instruments Act, 1881 (For short, 'NI Act'), whereby the petitioner was held guilty for commission of offence punishable under the aforesaid Section and was sentenced to undergo rigorous imprisonment for two yeas and to pay compensation to the complainant/respondent No.2 to the tune of cheque amount i.e. Rs. 7,50,000/- within a period of two months of expiry of period prescribed for appeal. The petitioner has also laid challenge



to the judgment dated 29.01.2025, passed by the Court of learned Additional Sessions Judge, Hoshiarpur, whereby the appeal of the petitioner had been dismissed.

2. Brief facts of the case relevant for the purpose of disposal of this petition are that the petitioner/accused was running a business of goldsmith under the name and style of 'Gulshan Jewelers'. He had obtained loan of Rs. 7,50,000/- from respondent No.2. The petitioner in order to discharge his legally enforceable debt, had issued a cheque for Rs. 7,50,000/-. However, on presentation of the said cheque by the complainant before its banker, the same was dishonoured with the remarks 'funds insufficient'. The petitioner was served with a legal notice on 30.09.2014 but he failed to make payment within the time stipulated. Aggrieved with the same, respondent No.2 filed the aforesaid complaint under Section 138 of NI Act, in which, the petitioner held guilty and sentenced as mentioned above. The appeal filed by the petitioner was also dismissed by learned Appellate Court. Hence, the present revision petition. During the pendency of this petition, the sentence of the petitioner was suspended vide order dated 28.02.2025 and since then, he is on bail.

3. It is submitted by learned counsel for the petitioner that an amicable settlement has been arrived at between the petitioner and respondent No.2/complainant. In pursuance of the said settlement, the entire disputed amount has been given by the petitioner to the complainant. It is submitted that the complainant also admits the factum of the above stated settlement having been arrived between the parties and about receipt of entire disputed amount and therefore, he deserves to be granted permission



to compound the offence.

4. Learned counsel for respondent No.2/complainant has affirmed the factum of receiving the entire disputed amount from the petitioner and has submitted that he has no objection, if the offence is compound in favour of the petitioner and the judgment of conviction and order of sentence recorded by learned trial Court and affirmed by learned Appellate Court are quashed and set aside.

5. Section 147 of NI Act makes all offences under this Act as compoundable offences. It is well settled proposition of law by now that in view of the provisions contained under this Section read with Section 320 of Cr.P.C., a compromise arrived *inter se* parties can be accepted and the offence committed under Section 138 of NI Act, can be ordered to be compounded even after conviction. Reference in this regard can be made to the judgment dated 02.03.2022 pronounced by the High Court of Himachal Pradesh in Criminal Misc. (main) petition No. 107 of 2022 under Section 482 of Cr.P.C. titled as ***Hiranand Shastri Vs. Ram Rattan Thakur and another***, wherein it was observed that the judgment of conviction recorded under Section 138 of NI Act can be recalled, in view of the specific provisions contained under Section 147 of the Act, which provide for compounding of offence allegedly committed under Section 138 of NI Act. Similar proposition of law was laid down in the judgment dated 21.12.2021 in ***CRM-M-No. 2499-2021 in Geeta Devi Vs. Surinder Singh and another***, wherein it was observed by the High Court of Himachal Pradesh that the Court has ample powers under Section 147 of NI Act to compound the offence in those cases, where the accused already stands convicted.



Reference can also be made to the authority cited as ***Sube Singh and another vs. State of Haryana and another, 2013 (4) R.C.R. (Criminal) 102***, wherein a Division Bench of this Court has held that even after the conviction, if the parties have settled the dispute amicably and have decided to live in peace and harmony, this Court, in exercise of powers under Section 482 Cr.P.C., can compound the offence.

6. In ***Damodar S. Prabhu Vs. Sayed babalal H. 2010(2) RCR (Criminal) 851***, the Hon'ble Supreme Court had laid down several guidelines with regard to the proceedings conducted in connection with complaints filed under Section 138 of NI Act. It was observed that the interest of the complainant lied primarily in recovering the money rather than seeing the drawer of the cheque in jail with respect to the offence of dishonour of the cheque and it is compensatory aspect of the remedy which should be given priority over the punitive aspect. In ***Raj Reddy Kallen Vs. State of Haryana and another (2024) 5 SCR 203***, it was observed by Hon'ble Supreme Court that keeping in mind that 'compensatory aspect,' of remedy shall have priority over the 'punitive aspect', courts should encourage compounding of offences under the N.I. Act, if the parties are willing to do so.

7. In the instant case, as discussed above, the parties have settled their dispute amicably, in pursuance of which, the entire disputed amount has been paid by the petitioner to the respondent. Their statements recorded on 06.03.2025 before the trial Magistrate have been received, wherein factum of compromise has been admitted. This fact is also affirmed by learned counsel for respondent No.2/complainant. He has stated that the complainant has no objection if the offence is compounded. This amicable settlement has



arrived at between the parties after passing of judgment dated 29.01.2025 by the learned Appellate Court. There is no doubt that the petitioner and the respondent have reached at a settlement permissible by law. This Court has also satisfied itself regarding the genuineness of the settlement. As such, in the considered opinion of this Court, the conviction of the petitioner would not serve any purpose and is required to be set aside. In the light of the judicial precedents as referred to above and the attendant facts and circumstances of the case, this Court is of the considered opinion that the offence deserves to be compounded in favour of the petitioner. Accordingly, the present petition is allowed and the judgment of conviction and order of quantum of sentence both dated 07.06.2017 passed by the learned trial Magistrate as well as the judgment dated 29.01.2025 passed by the learned Appellate Court are set aside. The offence for which the petitioner was convicted stands compounded and the petitioner is acquitted on account of such compounding. His personal/surety bonds be discharged accordingly.

8. Since the main petition has been disposed of, pending application, if any, is rendered infructuous.

[MANISHA BATRA]
JUDGE

24th March, 2025

Parveen Sharma

1. <i>Whether speaking/ reasoned</i>	:	<i>Yes / No</i>
2. <i>Whether reportable</i>	:	<i>Yes / No</i>