

Jadunath Singh
v.
Arvind Kumar & Ors. Etc.

Criminal Appeals No. 2170 - 2172 of 2024
(Arising Out of SLP(Crl.) Nos. 7961-7963 of 2023)

19 April 2024

[Vikram Nath* and Sanjay Kumar, JJ.]

Issue for Consideration

Criminal appeal filed by appellant Jadunath Singh against the Allahabad High Court's decision to grant bail to Arvind Kumar, Chandra Kumar @ Chandu, and Rishi Kumar, who were convicted for life imprisonment under the Indian Penal Code for offenses including murder. The incident occurred on February 11, 2011, in Village Bhogaon, where Arvind Kumar and his associates, armed with firearms, opened fire on Jadunath Singh and others, resulting in the deaths of Rajvir and Pawan Kumar, and injuries to Ravita. The accused were convicted under Sections 147, 148, 302/149, and 120B of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and sentenced to life imprisonment. During the trial, two of the accused, Chandra Kumar and Rishi Kumar, murdered a police constable, Ajay Kumar, while in judicial custody and attempted to escape, leading to additional charges and a separate trial; Whether the High Court's decision to grant bail was made with all relevant facts, including the accused's subsequent criminal conduct, being presented before it; and Whether the principle of parity with other co-accused who have been granted bail is applicable in this case, given the distinct roles and additional crimes committed by Chandra Kumar and Rishi Kumar.

Headnotes

Bail – Appeals arising from a Common Order passed by Allahabad High Court – Appellants challenge the High Court's order granting bail to the applicants – Applicants are “dreaded criminals” who have committed multiple murders, including the murder of Police Constable – Appellant fears if applicants are released on bail, they may conspire to harm the complainant and his family members – High Court's decision to grant bail was made without considering all relevant facts, particularly the applicants' subsequent criminal conduct and the ongoing

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trial for the murder of the police constable – The other co-accused is not part of the murder of the police constable – No interference with the bail granted to such co-accused by the High Court. [Para 12-13]

Held: The High Court did not consider the fact of the murder of the constable- Bail granted to the accused in the murder of the constable is cancelled – Insofar as the other co-accused is concerned, he is not a party to the murder of the constable – Hence, no interference with the bail granted to the co-accused.

List of Acts

Indian Penal Code, 1860.

List of Keywords

Bail; Co-accused; Parity; Seriousness; Relevant facts.

Case Arising From

CRIMINAL APPELLATE JURISDICTION: Criminal Appeal Nos. 2170-2172 of 2024

From the Judgment and Order dated 08.02.2023 of the High Court of Judicature at Allahabad in CRLA Nos. 5033, 5100 and 5102 of 2019

Appearances for Parties

Ravindra Singh, Sr. Adv., Raman Yadav, Syed Mehdi Imam, Ms. Akriti Chaturvedi, Priyam Kaushik, Advs. for the Appellant.

Shashank Shekhar Singh, Ms. Pooja Singh, Abhinav Singh, Varun Thakur, Deepak Goel, Mrs. Tanuj Bagga Sharma, Dr. M.K Ravi, Denson Joseph, M/S. Varun Thakur & Associates, Advs. for the Respondents.

Judgment / Order of the Supreme Court

Judgment

Vikram Nath

Leave granted.

2. These appeals arise from a Common Order passed by Allahabad High Court on 08.02.2023 while adjudicating three Criminal Appeals- Criminal Appeal No. 5033 of 2019 (Arvind Kumar vs State of U.P.),

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Criminal Appeal No. 5100 of 2019 (Chandra Kumar @ Chandu vs State of U.P.) and Criminal Appeal No. 5102 of 2019 (Rishi Kumar vs State of U.P.). The Applicants had sought for suspension of sentence and grant of bail through these Appeals on the primary ground that they are in jail for more than ten years. Also, two co-accused Pramod Kashyap and Adesh Kumar had been granted bail by co-ordinate bench of same High Court. By the Impugned order, the three Applicants- Arvind Kumar, Chandra Kumar @ Chandu and Rishi Kumar were granted bail during the pendency of their Criminal appeals, with condition of furnishing a personal bond in the sum of Rs.50,000/- each (Fifty Thousand) along with two sureties. Appellant is the Complainant and has challenged the order of granting bail through these appeals.

3. The three Applicants have filed separate Criminal Appeals before High Court against order of Sessions Court dated 06.06.2019 whereby total five Accused namely, Arvind Kumar, Chandra Kumar @ Chandu, Rishi Kumar, Pramod Kashyap and Adesh Kumar were convicted under Sections 147, 148, 302/149 and 120B of Indian Penal Code, 1860¹. They were sentenced for life imprisonment under Section 302/149 of IPC along with fine of Rs. 20,000/-. By the same order two other accused- Monu and Amit Kumar were acquitted of all the Charges.
4. The brief facts leading to these appeals are as follows:
 - 4.1 On 11.02.2011, the appellant/Complainant- Jadunath Singh submitted a Written Report narrating the incident leading to present Criminal case. He stated that in Village Bhogaon there is a plot illegally taken by Arvind Kumar (accused- respondent). He was removed from its illegal possession by Rajvir, son of the Complainant, in accordance with the order of District Magistrate.
 - 4.2 On the same day around 11.45 AM, Complainant Jadunath Singh along with his son Rajvir, Pawan Kumar, Rawan Kumar, Upendra, Chedalal were sitting together, discussing the disputed plot. At this time, Arvind Kumar, armed with country made pistol (katta of 315 bore), his two sons-Chandra Kumar @ Chandu armed with katta and Rishi Kumar armed with katta along with Amit Kumar, armed with a rifle and two unknown

1 In short, "IPC"

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persons with rifles, arrived there in white coloured Maruti 800 Car and immediately opened fire at the complainant and all other persons sitting with him.

- 4.3 The Complainant and others ran into a nearby building owned by one Harvilas. They were chased by accused persons along with continuous firing. They managed to intrude in the room in which Rajvir and Pawan entered while hiding and escaping from the shots. There the accused aimed at Rajvir and Pawan, shot them dead and thus caused the death of both these victims and also injured Ravita- daughter in law of Harvilas, causing injuries upon her. Thereafter the accused persons fled away. The injured persons were taken to Hospital.
- 4.4 The Medical Officer on duty declared Rajvir and Pawan Kumar as brought dead. Ravita's treatment is under process. As per testimony of Dr. Ankit Nikant, Pawan's death was caused by fire arm injury on his chest and excessive bleeding from the same. Rajvir's death is caused from excessive bleeding from the 9 firearm wounds found on his body. Two injuries were found on Rajvir's shoulder and one injury was on his chest.
5. On the basis of the complaint given by Jadunath Singh (Appellant), FIR No. 1411 of 2011 was registered at Police Station Kotwali Dist. Mainpuri under Sections 147, 148, 149, 302, 307, 120B of IPC against five named accused and two unknown. After investigation Chargesheet was submitted against all the seven accused. However, three separate trials were registered being Session Trial No. 48 of 2013- State of U.P. vs Chandra Kumar and three others, namely Pramod Kashyap, Aadesh Kumar and Monu, Session Trial No. 321 of 2013- State of U.P. vs Arvind Kumar and Rishi Kumar and Session Trial No. 531 of 2013- State of U.P. vs Amit Kumar. The trials were clubbed and the leading case was ascertained as Sessions Trial No. 48 of 2013- State vs Chandra Kumar and three others.
6. Trial Court after appreciating the evidence led during the trial, convicted five accused namely Arvind Kumar, Chandra Kumar, Pramod Kashyap, Rishi Kumar and Aadesh Kumar under Section 302/149, 147, 148 and 120-B of IPC and awarded life sentence. It, however, acquitted two other accused namely Monu and Amit Kumar of all the charges.

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7. At this juncture it is relevant to note another criminal case involving some of the present convicted accused. On 31.01.2013, two accused viz Rishi Kumar and Chandra Kumar were produced before Sessions Court at Mainpuri, while in judicial custody by Constable Ajay Kumar. The two accused persons requested the police constable Ajay Kumar to take them out for attending nature's call. The police constable Ajay Kumar went along with two accused persons along with family members in a Maruti Car. As soon as they moved out from the Court campus, the two accused Chandra Kumar and Rishi Kumar opened fire on said police constable Ajay Kumar due to which said constable died on the spot and thereafter his dead body was thrown by the accused persons in front of the house of one Munshi Lal. Consequently, an FIR being Case Crime No.60 of 2013 was registered under Section 302 IPC. Charge sheet No. 29 of 2013 dated 27.07.2013 was also filed against eight accused persons- Rishi Kumar, Chandra Kumar, Sudha- wife of Rishi Kumar, Babli- wife of Chandra Kumar, Dharmveer, Monu, Jayshree and Ravindra Singh under Sections 302, 201, 120B, 34, 224 of IPC, with allegation that all eight accused hatched conspiracy for committing murder of Police Constable Ajay Kumar. The accused Chandra Kumar and Rishi Kumar absconded and were later on arrested by STF from Maharashtra where also they had opened fire on the police party for which a separate FIR Case Crime No. 54 of 2013.
8. Thus, Complainant has challenged the impugned order of granting bail on primary ground that the accused persons are dreaded criminals as initially they have committed two murders and later co-accused Chandra Kumar and Rishi Kumar, the sons of co-accused Arvind Kumar killed a Police Constable Ajay Kumar while he was on duty during the course of trial. Therefore, Complainant fears that after being released from jail, they will hatch another conspiracy for eliminating the complainant and his family members.
9. We have heard learned counsel for the parties and perused the material on record.
10. The High Court has granted bail taking into consideration the following two factors:
 - i) Period of incarceration;
 - ii) Two other co-accused have been granted bail.

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11. It appears that before the High Court, the fact relating to the murder of Ajay Kumar Police Constable in whose custody the accused Chandra Kumar and Rishi Kumar were produced before the Trial Court at Mainpuri and further, the fact that they had absconded after throwing the dead body of deceased Constable Ajay Kumar and later on arrested by Special Task Force (STF) from Maharashtra and during their arrest also they had resisted and opened fire on the police party for which a separate case was registered. Such facts have not been placed before the High Court. These were relevant facts which ought to have been placed before the High Court. The parity mentioned by the High Court in the impugned order relating to Adesh Kumar and Pramod Kashyap was clearly distinguishable not only with respect to their role in the case in hand but also, they were not involved in the murder of Ajay Kumar Police Constable.
12. In our considered opinion, two accused respondents namely Chandra Kumar and Rishi Kumar despite their period of incarceration of more than 10 years would not be entitled to grant of bail for their subsequent conduct for which they are facing separate trial.
13. Insofar as Arvind Kumar is concerned, he is not charge sheeted in the murder case of Ajay Kumar as such we are not inclined to interfere with the order of the High Court granting bail to him i.e. Arvind Kumar. However, insofar as the other two accused Rishi Kumar and Chandra Kumar are concerned, their bail deserves to be cancelled.
14. **Accordingly, the appeal against Arvind Kumar is dismissed, and other two appeals i.e. against Chandra Kumar and Rishi Kumar are allowed.** The impugned order of the High Court granting bail to Rishi Kumar and Chandra Kumar is set aside. They may surrender within two weeks failing which the High court will take appropriate steps for taking them into custody using coercive measures as are permissible under law.

Headnotes prepared by:
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(Verified by: Shadan Farasat, Adv.)

Result of the case:
Appeals disposed of.