

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF INDIA
CRIMINAL APPELLATE JURISDICTION
CRIMINAL APPEAL NO. 3 OF 2001

Nasiruddin Khan and Ors.

..Appellants

Versus

State of Bihar

..Respondent

J U D G M E N T

Dr. ARIJIT PASAYAT, J.

1. Challenge in this appeal is to the judgment of a learned Single Judge of the Patna High Court upholding the conviction of the appellant No.1 for offence punishable under Section 304 Part II of the Indian Penal Code, 1860 (in short the 'IPC') and sentence of 5 years and the other two appellants who were convicted for offence punishable under Section 323 IPC and were sentenced to undergo rigorous imprisonment for one year.

2. Prosecution version as unfolded during trial is as follows:

As per the Fardbeyan of Murtaza Khan (Ext.3), on 6.10.1981 at about 11.30 the informant was fixing pegs on his own sahan land to keep maize crops. Suddenly accused persons Nasiruddin Khan, Lajim Khan and Mehmood Khan came there and protested to the act of fixing of the pole. The informant replied that he was fixing the pegs on his own sahan and, therefore, there was no question of any protest. He also asked the accused to get the land measured to ascertain whether the peg was being fixed on the land of the latter or on his own land. But Nasiruddin Khan, Lajim Khan and Mehmood Khan announced that the informant will not heed to reason and, therefore, he should be assaulted. Thereafter, accused Majiruddhin Khan brought a bhala and Qayamuddin Khan and Sadruddin khan brought lathis. Majiruddin handed over the bhala to Nasiruddin khan and went back to bring another bhala. Lajim Khan also brought a lathi from his home. Thereafter, informant's brothers Salam Khan, Farman Khan

and Kalam Khan sons of Munshi Khan appeared there and asked the accused persons not to indulge in assault. In the meantime, informant's brother Kalam Khan was subjected to assault with bhala by Nasiruddin khan hitting him on the right temporal region. Subsequently, Nasiruddin Khan stood there with bhala in his hand and Sadruddin Khan, Gayamuddin Khan and Lajim Khan assaulted Kalam Khan, Salam Khan and Farman Khan as also Munshi Khan. When the villagers gathered, the accused persons made good their escape. The injured Kalam Khan was brought to the hospital, where the informant gave his fardbeyan.

The trial Court on the basis of the evidence of nine witnesses found the accused guilty and sentenced them as afore-noted. In the appeal, the views of the Trial Court were affirmed.

3. Learned counsel for the appellants submitted that the appellants exercised the right of private defence and, therefore, no offence was committed. Additionally it is

submitted that occurrence took place on 6.10.1981 and, therefore, in case of appellant No.1 the sentence should be reduced to the period already undergone. In case of other two appellants the provisions of Section 360 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (in short 'Cr.P.C.') should be applied.

4. Learned counsel for the State on the other hand supported the judgments of the trial Court and the High Court.

5. The trial Court and the High Court found that this is not a case where it can be said that the appellants were exercising the right of private defence. The plea taken was that the accused persons also suffered injuries and, therefore, the defence version of false implication and exercise of right of private defence should be accepted. The High Court noticed that the injuries on the accused persons were superficial in nature. After analyzing the evidence, the trial Court and the High Court have found that there was no question of

exercising the right of private defence. The trial Court and the High Court with reference to the evidence on record found that the so-called injury on Nasiruddin has to be viewed with suspicion. Although Nasiruddin claimed and alleged that he had sustained bhala injury, the injury report (Ex.B) discloses that the injury found on him by the Doctor indicated that the accused had suffered injury by hard blunt substance and the injuries were simple. Therefore, the High Court's judgment so far as the conviction and sentence of appellant No.1 is concerned is affirmed. However, considering the long passage of time and the period of sentence imposed, we think it appropriate to extend to appellants Nos.2 and 3 the benefits of Section 360 Cr.P.C. on entering into bonds of such amount as may be fixed by the learned trial Judge. Appellant No.1 shall surrender to custody forthwith to serve remainder of sentence.

6. The appeal is disposed of accordingly.

.....J.
(Dr. ARIJIT PASAYAT)

.....J.
(Dr. MUKUNDAKAM SHARMA)

New Delhi,
July 29, 2008