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MLHC010017952026

HIGH COURT OF MEGHALAYA
AT SHILLONG

Crl.Petn.No.159/2026

Date of Decision: 18.11.2026
Uploaded on: 19.11.2026

1.

2. Miss X daughter of Y (victim),

Vs

1. State of Meghalaya, represented by learned Public Prosecutor.
2. Chairperson, Child Welfare Committee, Tura, West Garo Hills. ..... Respondents

Coram:
Hon'ble Mrs. Justice Revati Mohite Dere, Chief Justice

Appearance:

For the Petitioners : Mr. S.A. Sheikh, Adv with
Mr. L.N. Arengh, Adv

For the Respondents : Mr. H. Kharmih, AAG with
Ms. S. Shyam, GA

i) Whether approved for reporting in Law journals etc.: Yes/No

ii) Whether approved for publication in press: Yes/No

JUDGMENT: (Oral)

Heard learned counsel for the parties.

2. Rule. Rule is made returnable forthwith with the consent of the parties and the petition is taken up for final disposal.

3. By this petition, the petitioners i.e. petitioner No.1 (original accused) and petitioner No.2 (survivor), seek quashing of the FIR registered with the Tura Women Police Station, being Tura Women P.S. Case No.62(11) of 2020, at the behest of the Child Welfare Committee, qua the petitioner No.1 for the alleged offence punishable under Section 5 (j)(ii) read with Section 6 of the POCSO Act and consequently, the proceeding pending before the learned Special Judge (POCSO), Tura, being Special (POCSO) Case No.19 of 2021.

4. Quashing is sought on the premise that the petitioner Nos.1 and 2, were in a live-in relationship earlier and have now got married i.e., they got married on 15th November, 2025, after the petitioner No.2 attained the age of majority and that from the said relationship, the petitioners have a girl child, who was born on 24th June, 2026.

5. Pursuant to the aforesaid, the parties i.e. the petitioners were directed to appear before the Secretary, High Court Legal Services Committee, so as to enable the Secretary to submit her report, as to whether the consent given by the petitioner No.2 was an informed consent and whether the petitioner No.2 and her child have received any benefits under any of the State or Central Government schemes etc.

6. The police officer of Tura Women Police Station was also directed to submit a report, as to whether the contents mentioned in the petition are true and correct i.e., the petitioners were married and have a child from the said marriage.

7. Pursuant thereto, the Secretary, High Court Legal Services Committee as well as the police officer of Tura Women Police Station have submitted their respective reports.

8. The report submitted by the Secretary, High Court Legal Services Committee filed in a sealed envelope is opened and the said report is taken on record. From the said report, it appears that the petitioner Nos.1 and 2, were in a romantic relationship

since 2019, and that they got married on 15th November, 2025 and have a child born from the said relationship. It further appears that the petitioner No.1 is residing with the petitioner No.2 and is taking care of her and the child and that the petitioner No.2 has not received any benefits under any of the schemes either from the State or Central Government for herself or for her child. The petitioner No.2 has given her consent to the quashing of the FIR, as she is married to the petitioner No.1 and as the petitioner No.1 is taking proper care of her and the child.

9. The police of Tura Women Police Station have also submitted her report. From the said report, it appears that during their enquiry they found that the parties i.e., the petitioners were living together and that they have got married on 15th November, 2025, in the presence of the family members of both sides and that they were living together happily. The report also further reveals that the petitioners have a child from the said marriage aged 5 months.

10. This Court in its judgment in the case of ***Shri Shalenbor Wahlang and anr. v. State of Meghalaya & anr***, passed in

Crl.Petn. No. 92 of 2023 dated **10th April, 2026**, in paragraphs 31, 33, 34 and 35 has observed as hereunder:

> "31. The ground realities in the State of Meghalaya cannot be ignored and lost sight of. It shows high incidents of adolescent consensual relationships culminating in elopement and early marriage or living together, as husband and wife, which is recognised by the society. Infact, cases of adolescent relationships where the parties i.e., the victim and the boy have got married or are living together as husband and wife and have a child from the said relationship are far too many, resulting in parties filing petitions under Section 528 BNSS (earlier, Section 482 Cr.P.C.) seeking quashing of the proceeding by consent of the parties.
> 32. .....
>
> 33. What also cannot be lost sight of is, that in Meghalaya, matrilineal system is a rare, ancient societal structure among the Khasi, Garo and Jaintia tribes, where lineage and inheritance pass through the mother. Children take their mother's surname, the youngest daughter inherits the property (is the custodian of ancestral property) and the husband often moves into the wife's house. The system is believed to have originated from an agrarian society and the need to protect the family structure, ensuring women's economic security, social stability and the preservation of tribal identity. Infact, in the Khasi community, women have more independence than women in many patriarchal communities, including the freedom to select their partners, remarry without shame and take an active role in public places like market place and businesses. It is in this background that this Court would have to consider a case seeking quashing of a POCSO case by consent, keeping in mind all factors, including the girl's (victim's) and her child's social security, by ensuring that she and the child get the benefit of the government schemes, including under the POCSO Act.

34. Thus, from the aforesaid discussion, quashing of a POCSO case under Section 528 BNSS by consent, is permissible even if it is a special statute and there is no specific exclusion of any present law/custom. However, the said discretion has to be used with due care and caution and circumspection in exceptional cases, to do justice. As noted earlier, there cannot be any straitjacket formula as to in which cases the said discretion can or cannot be exercised, inasmuch as, that would depend on the facts and circumstances of each case i.e., the age of the parties coming before the court; whether the consent given by the victim is an informed consent and not under coercion of the family members or the boy; that the victim and the accused are married and have a child or are living together as husband and wife, as per the customs in the State of Meghalaya, etc. Where parties are living together as husband and wife or are married, a police report, or a report from any authority, be called for, verifying the said claim. Also, while considering whether the consent of the victim is an 'informed consent', it is necessary that the victim places her affidavit on record giving her 'No Objection' to the quashing of the case. That, before such an affidavit is accepted, in order to ensure that the consent is an informed consent, the victim may be sent before the Secretary, MLSA or Secretary, DLSA to ascertain whether the consent is an informed consent, by giving her time to ponder over the same; and a report be called for, before such quashing petition is considered. While quashing the case, the Government schemes that may be available to a victim in a POCSO Act and the child born from the said relationship also be given due weightage as suggested and directed by the Apex Court in the case of ***Re: Right to Privacy of Adolescents*** (supra)**.**

35. No doubt, we are conscious of the fact that a case under POCSO Act, is not a case against an individual, but is an offence against the society as a whole, however, the administration or enforcement of the law cannot be divorced from lived realities. Rendering justice demands not only that the law be applied with precision, but also

> that it be tempered with fairness, compassion and empathy when the situation/facts of a case, warrant it. Thus, it is necessary to maintain a fine balance between the competing interests of justice, deterrence and rehabilitation. Where the victim and the boy are married or are living together as husband and wife (and recognised), and have a child/children, sending the boy to jail would not serve the cause of justice, rather it would cause great injustice to the victim and the child born from the said consensual relationship, as ultimately, the aim of the law is to do justice. Thus, in cases where the court comes to the conclusion, that the consent given by the victim is a genuine and informed consent and that it would be greater injustice to send the boy to jail, instead of letting the parties live together as one family, the Court may consider quashing the case, pending trial, keeping in mind what is stated aforesaid. We may note, considering the large number of POCSO cases, in particular *Romeo – Juliet* cases, it is the responsibility of the State Government to create awareness amongst the people, including the children about the provisions of the POCSO Act, its punishment, etc., not only in the cities but also in the interior and remote places, including schools, colleges, etc."

11. Considering the observations made in the aforesaid judgment, the report of the Secretary, High Court Legal Services Committee; the report of the police officer of Tura Women Police Station, the fact that the petitioners were living earlier together as husband and wife and are married since, November, 2025 and have a child aged 5 months, the fact that the parties have attained the age of majority and have got married and the no objection given by the petitioner No.2 to the quashing of the FIR

and consequently, the proceeding, there is no impediment if the petition is allowed.

12. Accordingly, the petition is allowed and FIR registered with the Tura Women Police Station, being Tura Women P.S. Case No.62(11) of 2020 and consequently, the proceeding pending before the learned Special Judge (POCSO), Tura, being Special (POCSO) Case No.19 of 2021, stand quashed and set aside.

13. The petition is allowed and Rule is made absolute on the aforesaid terms.

14. Petition is disposed of accordingly.

15. Needless to state, that the petitioner No.2 and her child be extended all benefits as may be applicable to them i.e., the Schemes from either the State or Central Government, which are as under;

> (i) Scheme for Care and Support to Victims of under Sections 4 and 6 of the POCSO Act (exclusively for POCSO victims) [Nirbhaya Fund];
> (ii) Mission Vatsalya Scheme (Child Protection Services);
> (iii) Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao (BBBP) Scheme;

(iv) Meghalaya Victim Compensation Scheme, 2022;

(v) Meghalaya Health Insurance Scheme;

(vi) Ayushman Bharat-PM-JAY (free health);

(vii) Mission 1000 Days-Meghalaya;

(viii) Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK);

(ix) Chief Minister's Safe Motherhood Scheme or CM-SMS;

(x) Special Training Programme for age-appropriate admission of Out of School Children (OoSC) and Back to School Campaign;

(xi) Samagra Siksha (Back to School);

(xii) NALSA (Child-Friendly Legal Services for Children) Scheme 2024;

(xiii) NALSA (Legal Services to Persons with Mental Illness and Persons with intellectual Disabilities) Scheme, 2024; and

(xiv) Mission Shakti-Women's Safety, Support and Empowerment; and

(xv) Insurance or any other scheme.

16. In order to enable the petitioner No.2 to get the benefits of the above said schemes, the DCPO as well as the Secretary, DLSA, Tura to appoint a support person to ensure that the benefits as may be applicable to the petitioner No.2 and her child are made available to them at the earliest and in any event within eight weeks from the date of receipt of this order. The petitioner No.2 shall also be extended the benefit of the Victim Compensation Scheme at the earliest.

17. A compliance report of the benefits extended to the petitioner No.2 and her child be placed before this Court on the next date.

18. If compensation under the Victim Compensation Scheme is granted to the petitioner No. 2, the said money received will be kept in a Fixed Deposit till the petitioner No. 2 attains the age of 25 years. However, the petitioner No. 2 would be entitled to quarterly interest on the said amount and would be free to deal with the said amount on attaining the age of 25 years.

19. **The Registry to forward forthwith a copy of this order to both, the Member Secretary, Meghalaya State Legal Services Authority, Shillong and Commissioner and Secretary, Social Welfare Department, Shillong as well as to the DCPO and the Secretary, DLSA, Tura, to enable them to take steps and comply with the same.**

20. Although, the petition is disposed of, list the petition on **3rd February, 2027** for recording compliance of the directions given in paragraphs 15 to 18 aforesaid.

21. All parties to act on the authenticated copy of this order.

(**Revati Mohite Dere**)
Chief Justice

Meghalaya
18.11.2026
"Lam DR-PS"

Verified
Digitally signed by: LAMPHRANG KHARCHANDY
Signed On: 19-11-2026 17:45:33 IST