

News

A guy is charged with contempt of court by the Allahabad High Court after sending a derogatory WhatsApp message to a judge.

After the message got widespread among lawyers, the judicial officer issued a reference in 2023, which led to the start of the contempt case.

A man was recently charged by the Allahabad High Court under the Contempt of Courts Act for a WhatsApp message in which he claimed that a judge had accepted bribes and had, in some circumstances, fabricated order sheets.

A Division Bench consisting of Justices JJ Munir and Pramod Kumar Srivastava stated that Krishna Kumar Pandey, who shared the message in a WhatsApp group of District Basti attorneys, had a prima facie case for criminal contempt proceedings.

"The Court ordered on September 18 that a copy of this charge, copies of the papers, and a notice that this matter will be heard and decided on 09.10.2025 at 2:00 p.m. and that the contemnor shall remain present in person on the said date and time be served upon the contemnor."

Pandey had contested the su motu proceedings against him, claiming that in order to file a contempt of court action, the Advocate General had to provide his prior consent. The Court stated that it is always free to consider a criminal contempt case.

Furthermore, the Court rejected the premise that the Chief Justice should be tasked with looking into the accusations made against the trial court judge. According to Pandey, there is

an internal process for looking into allegations against district court judges that were captured in WhatsApp communications.

"An internal process for investigating complaints against judges of the subordinate courts does not exist at all. Instead, this Court has disciplinary authority over District Court judges. If a complaint is made against them, it is first investigated administratively before being investigated further in a vigilance investigation. The learned Judge is thereafter the target of formal disciplinary procedures if material is discovered, the Court noted.

The Court clarified that the claim that an internal process exists for pursuing charges included in the WhatsApp communications that are the focus of the contempt proceedings is unquestionably unfounded in any current legislation.

It further stated, "We have not been shown any legislation supporting the existence of such an internal procedure."

On a referral by the judicial officer, who claimed that the WhatsApp message had gone widespread among the attorneys and was a premeditated attempt to intentionally scandalize and diminish the court's authority, Pandey was charged with contempt. A contempt of court case was registered in 2024 as a result of the 2023 reference.

In order to ascertain how Pandey joined the lawyer WhatsApp groups, the Court had already sent letters to several bar associations in the Bhasti area. The bar bodies responded by denying any involvement.

In front of the court, Pandey acknowledged that he was not a lawyer. Additionally, he turned down the High Court Legal Services Committee's offer of a senior lawyer's services. He claimed to be capable of self-defense.

After giving it some thought, the court determined that there was enough evidence to accuse him of contempt of court.

"That you, Krishna Kumar Pandey son of late Om Prakash Pandey, by your act in publishing the following post on the WhatsApp Group on 14.07.2023 from your Mobile No. xxx, committed an act which **scandalises** and lowers the authority of

the Court of the Additional District Judge/Fast Track Court-I, Basti by bringing the Court to disrepute on account of the insinuations made (WhatsApp message ...), and thereby committed criminal contempt of Court punishable under Section 12 read with Section 2(c) of the Contempt of Courts Act, 1971," it stated.

Pandey requested a trial and entered a not guilty plea.

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