

Allahabad High Court seeks answer to plea challenging recent designation of 90 Senior Advocates

The names were notified on November 5.

The Allahabad High Court on Wednesday issued notice on a plea challenging the recent designation of 90 lawyers as Senior Advocates.

The division bench of Justice Shekhar B Saraf and Justice Rajeev Bharti ordered the petitioner, advocate Anupam Mehrotra, to implead the 90 advocates as respondents to his plea and serve a notice on them through email.

"Upon perusal of cause title, we find that the 90 people, who have been designated as Senior Advocates have not been made a party. We are of the view that they are necessary and proper parties and are required to be added as respondents to the present writ case," the Court said.

It then ordered the High Court Registrar General of the High Court and other respondents to file their answers to the plea within a month

"The respondents including the newly added respondents are directed to file their counter affidavits within a period of four weeks; rejoinder affidavit, if any, may be filed within a period of two weeks thereafter," the Court ruled.

The matter is set for next hearing on January 28, 2026.

In his petition, Mehrotra has alleged that "mostly bad advocates" were conferred senior designation under the notification released last month.

The process leading to the designations was in derogation of the guidelines put down by the Supreme Court in Indira Jaising cases as well as Jitender v State (NCT of Delhi), the petitioner said.

As per the petition, the Permanent Committee for senior designations held its proceedings with undue haste in a short period of five days between September 30 and October 04 during which "it allocated 3.6 minutes per advocate on the first four days and 2.5 minutes per advocate on the final day".

According to the plea,

"It is evident that the Permanent Committee did not make any personal and in-depth examination of the candidates, a holistic assessment and a meaningful exercise."

Mehrotra also flagged that the Permanent Committee overlooked the importance of reported cases as out of the total 90 advocates designated as seniors, about 52 were unable to cite even a minimum of 10 reported decisions in their cases of past five years. 27 advocates had not given any citation of reported cases, the plea claimed.

He also claimed that the committee erred in focusing on income of the advocates despite the Supreme Court holding this aspect to be irrelevant.

Interestingly, the plea also highlighted that Mehrotra's name for senior designation was suggested by a sitting High Court judge. However, the Permanent Committee is reported to have rejected the proposal.

Mehrotra has argued that no reasons were given for the rejection and that the Permanent Committee did not disclose whether the judge was consulted before the rejection.

According to Mehrotra, his interaction with the members of Permanent Committee showed that their focus was on the candidates' wealth and not their knowledge and wisdom.

Advocate Mehrotra appeared in person.

Advocate Vijay Dixit argued for the High Court.

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